

OSHUA KURLANTZICK: The Coming Resource War

JASON ZENGERLE: The Nastiest Spat in Politics

WWW.TNR.COM ► OCTOBER 2, 2006

# THE NEW REPUBLIC

## The Home Front

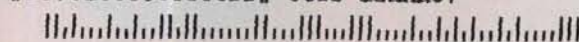
A Strategic Assessment of the Mommy Wars

JAMES WOLCOTT



#BXNRTKG \*\*\*\*\*AUTO\*\* 5-DIGIT 94301

#9070100000554422# 0633 13MAR07



RON K UNZ

# 371

555 BRYANT ST

PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704

P0007



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

copernican

the origin  
of emotions

mark devon

amazon.com

 BOOKSURGE  
D I R E C T

read the first ten chapters at  
[www.theoriginofemotions.com](http://www.theoriginofemotions.com)

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
MARTIN PERETZ

EDITOR Franklin Foer

LITERARY EDITOR Leon Wieseltier

EXECUTIVE EDITOR J. Peter Scoblic

MANAGING EDITOR Katherine Marsh

DEPUTY EDITOR Richard Just

MANAGING EDITOR/ONLINE

Adam B. Kushner

EDITOR-AT-LARGE Peter Beinart

SENIOR EDITORS

Jonathan Chait, Jonathan Cohn,  
Michelle Cottle, Michael Crowley,  
Ruth Franklin, John B. Judis,  
Lawrence F. Kaplan, Ryan Lizza,  
Christopher Orr, Noam Scheiber,  
Lee Siegel, Andrew Sullivan,  
James Wood, Jason Zengerle

LEGAL AFFAIRS Jeffrey Rosen

ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR

Britt Peterson

TNR ONLINE

Christiane Culhane, Culture Editor

FILMS Stanley Kauffmann

THEATER Robert Brustein

ART Jed Perl

ARCHITECTURE Sarah Williams Goldhagen

MUSIC David Hajdu

DANCE Jennifer Homans

POETRY EDITOR Glyn Maxwell

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS

Thomas B. Edsall, Joshua Kurlantzick

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Fouad Ajami, David A. Bell, Paul Berman,  
Gregg Easterbrook, Jean Bethke Elshtain,  
Nathan Glazer, Anthony Grafton, David Grann,  
David Greenberg, Yossi Klein Halevi,  
Robert Kagan, Michael Kinsley,  
Charles Krauthammer, Jeremy McCarter,  
John McWhorter, Sherwin B. Nuland,  
Michael B. Oren, David Rieff, Maggie Scarf,  
Ronald Steel, Cass R. Sunstein, Alan Taylor,  
E.V. Thaw, Helen Vendler, Michael Walzer,  
Sean Wilentz, Alan Wolfe, Robert Wright

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

Jack Coughlin, David Cowles,  
Vint Lawrence, David Schorr

ASSOCIATE EDITOR Spencer Ackerman

ART/DESIGN DIRECTION

Joe Heroun, Christine Carr/H2C Media

EDITORIAL-CORPORATE COORDINATOR

Linda Gerth

PRODUCTION AND IT DIRECTOR

Bruce Steinke

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Henry Riggs

ASSISTANT EDITORS

Kara Baskin, Alexander M. Belenky,  
Eve Fairbanks, Marisa Katz,  
Keelin McDonell

ASSISTANT LITERARY EDITOR

Chloë Schama

ASSISTANT POETRY EDITOR Melanie Rehak

REPORTER-RESEARCHERS

Isaac Chotiner, Bradford Plumer, Elspeth Reeve

INTERN

Conor Clarke

INTERN, TNR ONLINE

Oliver Lukacs

GENERAL MANAGER Aileen Chin

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR Lori Fleishman Dorr

ONLINE MARKETING MANAGER Emilie Harkin

ADVERTISING SALES & MARKETING

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER Richard Parker

DIRECTOR OF ADVERTISING, WEST

Joan Stapleton Tooley

ACCOUNT DIRECTOR Julie Sturmak Kettell

PUBLISHING REPRESENTATIVE

Perry Janoski, Allston-Cherry, Ltd.

MARKETING MANAGER Alexandra Scott

TNR/ON SYMPOSIA ON PUBLIC POLICY

Joan Daly

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

ACCOUNTING MANAGER Jessie Ahn

BUSINESS ASSISTANT Jillian Wheat

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LEONARD ASPER

LAURENCE GRAFSTEIN

ROGER HERTOG, Chairman

MARTIN PERETZ

MICHAEL STEINHARDT



# THE NEW REPUBLIC

A JOURNAL OF POLITICS AND THE ARTS

OCTOBER 2, 2006 WASHINGTON, D.C. ISSUE 4,785 VOLUME 235

## COVER STORY

*James Wolcott* **29 Meow Mix** Once again, the Stay-at-Home Moms and the Working Moms are beating one another up. Never before have women been so obsessed with other women's choices—and written so much about it. An impatient childless male considers Caitlin Flanagan, Linda Hirshman, and other recent combatants in the never-ending Mommy wars.

## POLITICS & THE WORLD

- Peter Beinart* **4 CORRESPONDENCE** The legacy of Katrina, &c.
- The Editors* **6 TRB | At Long Last** The twilight of Bush's new McCarthyism.
- Eve Fairbanks* **7 Compromised** The tortured alternative to Bush's detainee policy.
- Jason Zengerle* **8 Meshoppen Postcard: Choker** How a backrub gone awry could threaten the Republican majority.
- Lawrence F. Kaplan* **10 Double Enmity** Montagues v. Capulets. Hatfields v. McCoys. Gerstein v. Sirota.
- Andrew Lee Butters* **14 Peace Now ...** but war later? Bush's Iran policy revealed.
- Joshua Kurlantzick* **16 Clerical Era** Syria's road to Damascus.
- Sacha Feinman* **19 Crude Awakening** While Bush has focused on the war on terrorism, a scary new strategic threat has emerged: an alliance of energy-producing nations that have no love for the United States.
- Sacha Feinman* **42 LA GUAIRA DIARIST | Bananas**

## BOOKS & THE ARTS

- Stanley Kauffmann* **28 FILMS | Parting of Ways** *Old Joy* delights with elegant simplicity.
- Ruth Franklin* **36 The Epilogue** *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz* by Jan T. Gross
- John Hollander* **40 POEM | Policing the Yard**

NEW REPUBLIC

Updated daily. On the Web at [www.tnr.com](http://www.tnr.com).

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY Aaron Meshon

## CORRESPONDENCE

## STORM DETAIL

**J**ONATHAN COHN'S ARTFULLY VAGUE and studiously nonjudgmental account of the failed attempt by a Michigan church group to rescue the Anderson "family" after Hurricane Katrina had destroyed their New Orleans home provides enough information to raise questions but not nearly enough to answer them ("The Golden Ticket," August 14). We are told that, before Katrina, 40-year-old Carolyn and her "fiancé," Terrell, worked at menial jobs in a French Quarter hotel and were "living comfortably" in a house they had bought in the Ninth Ward. But we are not told whether they earned enough to pay for this house or support themselves and the three children—two of Carolyn's children and one of her grandchildren—without receiving aid from government welfare agencies or private charities, though it seems unlikely. A similar dearth of relevant information characterizes the story of their experience in Michigan, where the five people just mentioned are joined by another four—Carolyn's third daughter, Tyneshia; her husband, Randall; their baby, Deiontae; and Randall's elderly mother. Although his benefactors are quoted accusing Randall of misusing money they gave him, spending rent vouchers from FEMA, and stealing money from his mother (and Randall is quoted indignantly denying these charges), Cohn never tells us whether there is independent reason to think them true. Instead, he nimbly dodges the question by telling us that the landlord did not answer his call about the rent, as if placing that call constituted sufficient research into the matter. Cohn concludes by suggesting that the acknowledged failure of the church group's effort might not have been anybody's fault, just the inevitable product of a clash of well-intentioned wills or different ways of living. But one highly revealing bit of light is perhaps inadvertently thrown on the Anderson family's attitude when Randall is quoted as saying that they live from "day to day" without care for tomorrow. Cohn does not comment on this cryptic remark, but the rest of us are free to speculate that Randall and his "family" fear no ill

consequences from their demonstrably irresponsible behavior because they know that a naïve but kind-hearted and well-intentioned charity—or a well-funded government welfare agency—can always be counted on to take care of them.

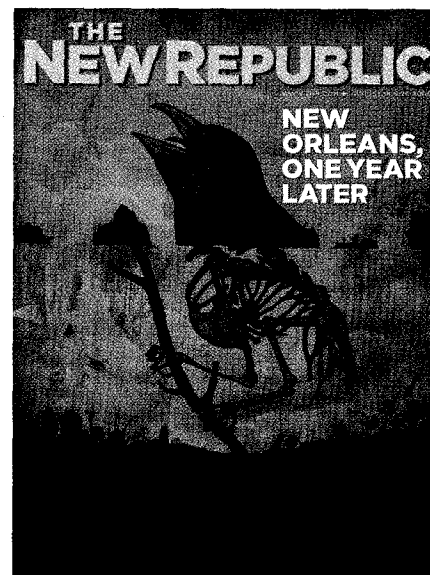
**MAX HOCUTT**  
*Tuscaloosa, Alabama*

## JONATHAN COHN RESPONDS:

This was a story full of ambiguity and wildly conflicting accounts from different protagonists. In crafting such a "studiously nonjudgmental account," my hope was that readers would draw their own conclusions about where the truth lies—which, apparently, is what Max Hocutt has done. I'll accept that as validation of my approach, even if he disagrees.

## DOUBLE STANDARD

**I**CAN CERTAINLY APPRECIATE PETER Beinart's admiration for a younger Joe Lieberman, even if I don't entirely share it ("Moe Joe," August 14). During the Clinton presidency, it's indisputable that Lieberman spoke what was, from his perspective, truth to power. It's hard not to love someone who challenges the received wisdom. But Lieberman's willingness to call executive malfeasance by its proper name appears to have ended with the Clinton presidency. Instead, he has intimated that criticism of President Bush is akin to treason. That's hardly challenging received wisdom—at best, it's enabling bad behavior and at worst toadying to executive power run amok. Furthermore, beating up on Democrats for their real (or, worse, imagined) flaws is hardly an act of political courage these days. Indeed, haranguing Democrats for putting the country in peril is much more like demagoguery than iconoclasm. The popular word is that the Democrats who rejected Lieberman were intolerant and unwilling to brook dissent on the war.



But Lieberman essentially called those who disagreed with his position on the war traitors. Now who's being intolerant?

**RICHARD THOMPSON**  
*Chicago, Illinois*

## CHILDREN OF WAR

**O**NE SYMPATHIZES WITH LEON Wieseltier's introspection ("The Children of Qana," August 14), but, in accepting the killing of children as a military reality, he stays on the surface of a psychological reality. He says many eloquent things, yet none quite ring with the authority of Golda Meir's "We can forgive our enemies for killing *our* sons, but we cannot forgive them for forcing us to kill *their* sons." Where are such statements from our current leaders? Their absence indicates a coarsening of the spirit, albeit under astounding pressure. Knowing that moral absolutes elude us in a deconstructive age, can we take the protection of children as an irreducible axiom? Can remembering the child as a vulnerable bearer of human consciousness—as one who suffers imaginatively as well as actually—give us

THE NEW REPUBLIC (ISSN 0028-6583), Vol. 235, Number 4, Issue 4,795, October 2, 2006. (Printed in the United States on September 21, 2006.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated March 20 & 27, June 5 & 12, July 10 & 17, August 14 & 21, September 11 & 18, and November 27 & December 4, 2006) at 1331 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Telephone: (202) 508-4444. For advertising inquiries, please contact Jillian Wheat at (202) 508-4444. Yearly subscriptions: \$79.97; foreign: \$119.97 (U.S. funds); Canada: \$99.97 (U.S. funds). Back issues: \$9.00 domestic and \$10.00 foreign/Canada (includes postage & handling). © 2006 by The New Republic, LLC. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 628-9383. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. For hard copy reprints, call (202) 508-4444. Microform: Canadian Periodical Index and CD-ROM are available through ProQuest, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone: (800) 521-0600. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 420236, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0236. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope (e-mail address: letters@mr.com). For subscription inquiries or problems call (800) 927-1289 or visit our website at www.thenewrepublic.com.

the moral floor that guards us from ethical freefall? I would argue that concern for suffering can be effective as well as ethical. As it stands now, the perception of an Israeli overreaction has done much to grant Hezbollah a propaganda victory, if not an actual one. An Israel at its best—surgical in defense and necessary offense, humanitarian to its enemies always—diminishes the hatred that fans terrorism. Surely, many important political ideas begin with compassion for the suffering of a child and fury at the adult who caused it. Later, as ideas are implemented within cumbersome realities, the shadows of practicality cover the feeling within thought. War casts these shadows in iron, illuminating them with bombs. We need to recall our sympathy with the suffering consciousness of a child, the human empathy that turned us into Zionists or, perhaps, Arabists in the first place. Let's remember it and not put out the light of a soul, an *olam shalem* (entire world)—the being of a child as sensitive and full of pain as most of us were when we began on the path of political thought.

**GAVRIEL REISNER**

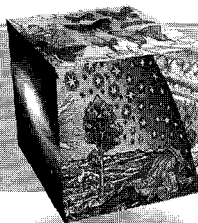
*New York, New York*

#### LEON WIESELTIER RESPONDS:

Sure, we can take the protection of children as an irreducible axiom—and then we can watch as we, and others, reduce it. Gavriel Reisner is lost in feeling. There is no such thing as surgical warfare, no matter how morally scrupulous and technologically sophisticated it is. As long as its enemies operate within a civilian population, Israel's defense will not be an edifying humanitarian enterprise. *That* is the problem. Moreover, Israel has not been "forced" to kill every one of "their sons": Israel is a free and powerful state, and Golda Meir's stirring little sentence cannot absolve it of its every targeting decision. Anyway, I am not so quick to forgive Israel's current enemies for "killing our sons," since the killings of those innocents is nothing less than their strategic objective. I do not see Hezbollah or Hamas consumed by postwar introspection.

#### DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

In "GOPTopia" (September 11 & 18), Elliott Abrams was mistakenly reported to be a resident of McLean, Virginia. In fact, he lives in neighboring Great Falls. We regret the error.



## CALL-FOR-PROPOSALS

Up to \$500,000 Grants over Three-to-Four Years

Templeton Research Lectures on the Constructive Engagement of Science and Religion

Deadline: January 1, 2007

Science can inspire greater reverence, wonder, and awe. It also poses with urgency traditionally religious questions of meaning and purpose, of virtues and values. Science provides a continuous stream of remarkable insights into the nature of reality across a wide range of domains. By giving rise to astonishing transformations, science changes both our world and our worldviews.

The goal is to promote the constructive engagement and original research between the physical, biological, and human sciences and those modes of inquiry and understanding generally found within the domains of theology, religious studies, and philosophy. This project is designed as a catalyst for original research and progress. The program seeks to create long-term networks for vibrant and broadly significant scholarly exchange and continuing interdisciplinary endeavors.

This project is administrated by the Metanexus Institute on behalf of the John Templeton Foundation. For more information, go to [www.metanexus.net/lectures](http://www.metanexus.net/lectures). Applicants are invited to discuss their proposals with the project director prior to submitting them. All inquiries should be directed to:



William Grassie, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Metanexus Institute  
3624 Market Street, Suite 301  
Philadelphia, PA 19104 USA

Voice: 215.789.2200  
FAX: 215.789.2222  
Email: [lectures@metanexus.net](mailto:lectures@metanexus.net)  
[www.metanexus.net/lectures](http://www.metanexus.net/lectures)



## There will always be an audience for a powerful idea.

Before it's an event, it's an idea. For 90 years and counting,

**The New Republic** has been at the forefront of liberal thought.

And that's where you should join us. Subscribe today at

[tnr.com/subscribe](http://tnr.com/subscribe) or call 800.827.1289.

**Where opinions get started.**



# At Long Last

**A**T FIRST, MCCARTHYISM was a partisan affair. Wisconsin's junior senator rocketed to political stardom in February 1950, when he told the Republican Women's Club in Wheeling, West Virginia, that Harry Truman's State Department was infested with Communists. As that year's midterm campaign progressed, Joe McCarthy's staff helped doctor a photo of Maryland Democrat Millard Tydings, making him appear to be huddled with former U.S. Communist Party chief Earl Browder. 1952 brought more of the same, with McCarthy accusing the Truman and Roosevelt administrations of "20 years of treason." And it worked. With McCarthy's help, Republicans took the House, Senate, and White House for the first time in 24 years.

But, in 1953, McCarthy branched out. He began referring to "21 years of treason." And he went after the military, viciously bullying a brigadier general and World War II hero named Ralph Zwicker. Finally, Dwight Eisenhower—who had kept a cynical silence as McCarthy slandered Democrats—realized that his beloved Army and his own neck were at stake. In 1954, the White House and the Army counterattacked, hatching the ethics investigation that ultimately brought McCarthy down. The jig was up.

The Bush administration's McCarthyism also began as a partisan affair. In 2002, Georgia Republicans interspersed Democrat Max Cleland's face with those of Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden. Bush said that the Democratic-controlled Senate that opposed his version of the homeland security bill was "more interested in special interests in Washington and not interested in the security of the American people." Two years later, attacking John Kerry for supposed flip-flopping during the presidential campaign, he warned that "you can embolden an enemy by sending a mixed message."

The White House didn't argue, as McCarthy did, that Democrats actively support America's enemies. (While some '50s Democrats had indeed sympathized with communism earlier in their careers, no current Democrats ever sympathized with Al Qaeda.) But Bush and his minions have done the next best thing: They have



argued that Democrats don't actively oppose America's enemies. And, this year, as the United States approaches its third national election since September 11, they are at it again. Desperate to focus on terrorism but not Iraq, they have made treatment of detainees a central campaign issue. And, as if on cue, House Majority Leader John Boehner last week wondered if Democrats are "more interested in protecting the terrorists than protecting the American people."

But there's a problem, and, oddly enough, it's the same one that bedeviled McCarthy a half-century ago: the U.S. military. The military, as it happens, believes strongly in the very Geneva Conventions prohibitions on torture that the Bush administration wants to evade. Soldiers know that they could become detainees themselves and that the Geneva Conventions could be the difference between life and death. So the military has turned, once again, to its most potent political allies. And the result, once again, is that McCarthyism is no longer a partisan affair. To attack the Democrats as soft on terrorists, the Bush administration must now say the same about Republicans John McCain, Lindsey Graham, and John Warner, arguably the most pro-military members of the U.S. Senate, and about Colin Powell, the most celebrated military man of our age.

In fact, the McCain-Graham-Warner-Powell rebellion may herald nothing less than the end of the war on terrorism as Bush defines it. Consider their arguments. "Some people," says Graham, consider the Geneva Conventions "a waste of time, but I know they have been helpful." In other words, the United States should respect international law. Contrast that with John Bolton, who, in the late '90s, said, "It is a big mistake for us to grant any validity to international law, even when it may seem in our short-term interest to do so—because, over the long term,

the goal of those who think that international law really means anything are those who want to constrict the United States." And it's not just international law. In demanding compliance with the Geneva Conventions, Graham, McCain, Warner, and Powell all cited international *opinion*. Here again, the battle lines are drawn. Responding to Powell's claim that "the world is beginning to doubt the moral basis of our fight against terrorism," Bill Kristol mocked "the notion that we'll get lots of credit in Europe by going the extra mile [on torture]." Kristol is expressing the Bush administration's view: It doesn't matter whether the United States respects human rights because non-Americans will hate us anyway. Our actions are irrelevant; the real issue is their pathology.

But the divide actually cuts deeper. It's not just that the Bushies don't think it matters if the United States violates human rights; to them, the United States *doesn't* violate human rights. Human rights are not what the Geneva Conventions say; human rights are whatever the United States does. When Amnesty International condemned abuses at America's anti-terrorist prison system, Bush didn't even bother to rebut the specifics. He simply called the allegation "absurd. . . . The United States is a country that promotes freedom around the world." Dick Cheney said the charge showed that Amnesty wasn't a serious human rights organization. As Arthur Schlesinger once wrote of John Foster Dulles, the Bush administration has "a complacent conviction of American moral infallibility."

This is the most fundamental part of the conservative foreign policy rebellion. McCain and his allies are not merely arguing that respect for human rights serves U.S. interests. They are arguing that human rights actually exist—that they constitute a universal standard above and beyond U.S. actions. The conservative rebels have taken aim at the moral relativism undergirding the Bush administration's supposed commitment to universal liberty. In so doing, they have made it much harder for Bush to equate opposing his policies with codding the terrorists and endangering the United States. And, just like Eisenhower in 1954, they have reasserted a different kind of conservatism—one that can proudly show its face to the world. Maybe, just maybe, the jig is up.

PETER BEINART

# Compromised

**W**ITH GEORGE W. BUSH'S diminished popularity, embattled Republican candidates have mastered the fine art of knifing their titular leader. But these commonplace acts of betrayal usually reside in the realm of mere symbolism—a presidential photo-op carefully avoided, a potshot at Donald Rumsfeld. They don't involve sinking the president's number-one policy

priority and shredding his ace-in-the-hole election strategy. That's why GOP Senators John McCain, Lindsey Graham, and John Warner racked up major style points for brashly challenging the president's request for broader authority to try suspected terrorists. Their apostasy has justly received many rounds of applause. For the moment, they have prevented the president from legalizing waterboarding, sleep deprivation, hypothermia, and other forms of torture that the White House refuses to classify as such, halting a revolution in U.S. law that would redefine the Geneva Conventions.

But the dissident senators haven't just stepped forward in the name of human rights; they are extolling the virtues of compromise. There is now an alternative proposal by McCain, Graham, and Warner on the table. And, while their resistance toward the president has been brave, their legislation is not. Before Democrats eagerly embrace McCain et al., they should understand the bill's many shortcomings.

In the *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* decision, the Supreme Court announced that, unless Congress changes the rules, the treatment of enemy combatants must adhere to minimal due process procedures, namely those found in ordinary court-martial proceedings. Unfortunately, you won't find those protections here. For starters, the bill strips federal courts of the ability

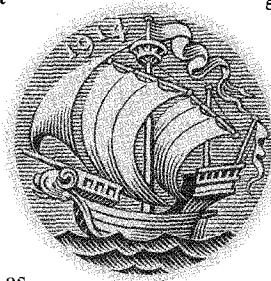
to hear challenges to the military commissions until after the trials are completed—which could result in years of legal uncertainty. It also repeals the writ of habeas corpus for suspected enemy combatants held at Guantánamo Bay who are never formally charged with a crime, making it impossible for them to challenge the lawfulness of their detentions. It denies suspected terrorists the right to see exculpatory evidence held by the government, to confront their interrogators in court, or even to see the original transcripts (rather than the translated summaries) of their statements to interrogators. When the government used similar procedures in the past, military prosecutors threatened to resign because they considered them fundamentally unfair. To be blunt: The compromise proposed by the three senators takes the administration's proposals as a starting point and then proceeds to roll back only a few of its more odious provisions.

McCain, Warner, and Graham aren't the only Republican senators to challenge administration policy and then fall short when positing an alternative. Arlen Specter sharply criticized the administration's approach to wire-tapping but then delivered an alterna-

tive bill that constitutes the most radical revision of surveillance law in a generation. His bill actually removes Bush's surveillance program from the exclusive oversight of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance (FISA) court. It would allow the interception of every call to and from the United States without a warrant or court order, as long as the government was not focusing on any particular suspect in the United States. By eliminating the requirement that the attorney general personally approve warrantless surveillance and report to the FISA court, the Specter bill would allow even broader domestic spying than even the administration wants. Unfortunately, Specter's bill cleared the Senate last week. Fortunately, competing legislation still stands a small chance of passage.

The stakes in the current debate could not be higher. In *Hamdan*, the Supreme Court indicated that nearly any program that Congress authorizes is likely, in most respects, to pass constitutional muster. This increases the responsibility on Congress to exercise meaningful oversight over the president, rather than acting like a pliant rubber stamp. Almost every congressional session in recent

memory has ended with preelection pandering: members of Congress trying to prove to their constituents that they are tough on crime, with new death penalty laws or sentencing enhancements. This is, in other words, never a conducive time of year to hash out major constitutional issues—especially when new legislation could eliminate crucial judicial and congressional checks on presidential power for generations to come. Rather than bending over backward to accommodate a grasping and politically weakened president, Congress would do better, for the moment, to pass nothing at all. ■



## Meshoppen Postcard Choker

BY EVE FAIRBANKS

**I**T'S LABOR DAY at the Wyoming County Fair in Meshoppen, Pennsylvania, and the campaign season is underway. At the Wyoming County Democrats booth, Chris Carney, an earnest young Naval Reserve commander-turned-professor who is running for Congress, entertains a steady stream of voters. Carney, the challenger, is stumping hard—there's speculation that if he can win in the strongly conservative Tenth District, Democrats can take back the House—and, soon, his booth runs out of yard signs. One might expect a similar scene at the GOP booth a few yards away. But no one, save for a few county party officials, is there—not even the district's incumbent Republican representative, Don Sherwood.

Instead, Sherwood, a grandfatherly man in a checkered shirt and work boots, can be found at the bottom of a short hill, away from the fair's lively bustle, standing by a horse-smelling mud patch. As he has almost every year for 15 years, Sherwood is helping lead a traditional farm competition called a horsepull, in which teams of Belgian Draft horses try to haul toboggans stacked with 1,000-pound concrete blocks 27-and-a-half feet along a strip of dirt. Usually, Sherwood helps load the concrete blocks onto the sled, but, a few weeks earlier, the 65-year-old had a heart procedure; so this year, he just hangs out, unannounced, chatting on his walkie-talkie. Although the race's first independent poll, released two weeks ago, has Sherwood seven points behind Carney, he is more passionate about discussing the drama of the horsepull than the upcoming election. "Oooh!" Sherwood whistles, in the middle of a question about his campaign: A pair of Belgians has stepped over the out-of-bounds line. "It's a psychological game," Sherwood tells me in a low voice. "If a teamster decides [his horses] can't pull it, he'll quit, because he doesn't want to teach them they can't pull it."

This calculus does not, it seems, apply to Sherwood himself. Despite the fact that he is facing the toughest challenge of his political career, Sherwood is surprisingly sanguine about his ability to pull his sled back to Washington. "I'm pretty well-known in the district—it's a lot of country people," he says. "I think we'll have it under control." Kicking back at the horsepull rather than joining the lawn-sign brigade might be a reflection of this confidence. But it might also be a way to hide out and avoid pressing the flesh—a potentially freighted activity for this embattled congressman. For, in addition to the considerable liabilities that come with being a Republican incumbent this fall, Sherwood has a highly original one of his own: In 2004, his 29-

year-old mistress accused him of trying to strangle her during a massage. That's right. Dennis Hastert and his party could lose the House thanks to a backrub gone awry.

**T**HE TALE OF Don Sherwood's rise is a post-1994 Republican fairy tale, in which a sensible Everyman ascends from the dusty walks of rural America to the halls of the Capitol. Returning home from the Army in 1966 with the entrepreneurial itch, Sherwood founded a car dealership in his Wyoming County hometown and was soon elected to the local school board. Over decades selling cars and building schools, he became known for his genial, can-do personality. In 1998, he made a longshot bid for Congress against a member of the Casey family, Pennsylvania political royalty. Nobody thought Sherwood could win, but, after mobilizing nearly 2,000 volunteers and campaigning on family values and lower taxes, he was elected by 515 votes—the closest victory in the country that night.

After another close race in 2000, the Republican state legislature redrew the Tenth District for Sherwood with the same tender care a man takes in building a dream house for his beloved. Blue Scranton was expertly excised from the east side, and rural, traditional segments of five counties were tacked onto the bottom. Sherwood also won a seat on the House Appropriations Committee—setting him up to bring home treats like a \$12 million grant to reclaim abandoned mine land. His new, gerrymandered district was so conservative—and so in love with his capacity to deliver pork—that even Democrats didn't seem to mind that he was a Bush loyalist. In the 2002 elections, Sherwood got enough write-in votes in the Democratic primary that he appeared on the final ballot as both the Republican and the Democratic candidate. As an unrepentant admirer who called himself Moon put it at the fair, the Tenth had become "Donnie Country."

Sherwood flourished in Washington as well, moving into Hill House, a reality show-ready Capitol Hill dormitory in which nearly half the rooms are occupied by legislators. Though he had a wife and kids back home, Sherwood enjoyed the Washington scene. "In most cities, the nightlife's on the weekends, but, in Washington, it's Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday!" he tells me. In 1999, at a Young Republicans event, he met Cynthia Ore, a Peruvian-American grocery-store heiress and aspiring Hill intern in her early twenties. She was attracted to his salt-of-the-earth charm. "Guys in D.C. try to be so suave," she later recalled in a newspaper interview. "They drive Bentleys and Ferraris. Don has a truck."

But, by September 15, 2004, Sherwood's country charm had worn thin. That was the day Ore called the police from the bathroom of his apartment in Hill House, claiming he had tried to throttle her. When the police arrived, Sherwood protested that he'd merely been giving Ore a vigorous backrub. The police, for their part, determined that Ore did not seem to be "of sound mind." A year later, after their



# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE NEXT EARTHQUAKE HITS \$400 BILLION ON THE RICHTER SCALE?

A repeat of the 8.3 magnitude quake that toppled San Francisco in 1906 would be as devastating to the Bay Area as Hurricane Katrina was to New Orleans.

Even worse could be a mega-quake on the New Madrid fault in America's heartland. Rocked by a series of 8.0+ magnitude earthquakes in 1811-12, scientists say the fault is long overdue for a quake of at least 6.0. And because soil is denser east of the Rocky Mountains, such a quake could affect 20 states and millions of people.

America is simply not ready to handle a catastrophe of this magnitude.

**Now that you know what the problem is, here's the solution.**

We support H.R. 4366 and S. 3117. This proposed legislation would strengthen first responders, rebuild devastated communities and save taxpayers billions. It uses insurance premiums — not tax dollars — to build a financial backstop against natural catastrophes like

earthquakes and hurricanes. And this legislation also harnesses the power of both the public and private sectors — working together — to prepare and protect America.

**IT IS TRULY A CAUSE WORTHY OF YOUR AND EVERY AMERICAN'S SUPPORT.**

Visit [www.protectingamerica.org](http://www.protectingamerica.org) and urge Congress to pass the legislation that will ensure America is sitting on solid ground.

report was made public, Ore sued Sherwood for \$5.5 million, but the matter was dispatched with a settlement.

Whether Sherwood was really choking or massaging may never be known. But the episode, while no Chappaquiddick, was pretty sordid for the Tenth. "Nobody has any morals anymore," one constituent lamented in the local paper. And yet, Sherwood vowed to run again.

Signs of trouble for his bid appeared long before this Labor Day. In May, despite having raised more than \$1 million, Sherwood was nearly derailed by a primary challenger who spent less than \$5,000 on her campaign and won 44 percent of the vote. Sherwood's underwhelming showing "shocked the political establishment in the state," says Terry Madonna, a professor of public affairs at Pennsylvania's Franklin & Marshall College, and led the *Cook Political Report*, the *Rothenberg Political Report*, and *Congressional Quarterly* to upgrade the race's competitiveness.

But Sherwood and his campaign staff seem only vaguely concerned about their precarious situation. As of press time, he has no campaign website. When I saw him at the fair, he had not sent out any mailings, nor done any TV ads (he recently went on the air, nearly a month after Carney). A call to the state committee revealed that no upcoming campaign events were on record there. "I don't know why," offered the perplexed committee staffer. "I guess we haven't been told about any."

Though some might chalk it up to incompetence, Sherwood and his staff imply that their lay-low strategy is intentional—that they understand things about how the race will play out that others don't. "The conventional wisdom is that the Democrats will take over the House, and Republicans aren't running good campaigns," a Sherwood staffer explains. "If you look at that, it's not true. People here are everyday people. They relate to somebody like Sherwood." As for the affair's impact on the race, when I ask Sherwood about the settlement, he replies, with a strange smile, "Do *you* think there was a settlement?"

What about the terrible primary, the disappointing poll? Worrying about how numbers stack up, the staffer explains, is a bad habit some Democrats have—specifically those who attended liberal arts colleges. "Being a student of Aristotle," he says, "you look at logic. Well, in 2000, there were more registered Democrats in the district, and Don still won."

In the end, aside from the sense of entitlement generated by the "Donnie Country" phenomenon, aside from the belief that the apparent national wish for change is a fad, and aside from denial of facts (on the poll: "We think the results are crap," Sherwood spokesman Jake O'Donnell told a local paper), there is an element of pure mysticism driving the Sherwood campaign. Rejecting the cold science of the Democrats, they keep faith with the justice of the heavens.

**B**UT THE MOST amazing thing about the alleged strangling is that it might not matter—or, at least, might not matter very much. Fortunately for Sherwood, sleaze isn't playing nearly as big in this

election as was expected. In recent polls, voters rank "ethics in Washington" or "corruption in Washington" at the very bottom of the list of factors influencing their November decision. Some at the fair even seem to expect a mishap like a strangling to befall anyone who sets foot in Washington. "Oh, *that*?" says Marlene Fuhr, a lively blonde dressed in pink from head to toe, when I ask her about the alleged strangling. "He misbehaved in Washington, but they all do!"

Unfortunately for Sherwood, the issues are playing well. When asked about the allegations, one registered Republican who worked with Sherwood on the school board responds, "Yes, I was surprised, and disappointed. ... [But] my greater disappointment with Don is the nearly visible puppet strings to the Bush administration." And, at the fair, outside a pink-and-white striped funnel cake stand, Bradford Barnes, a born-again Christian conservative from nearby Mehoopany, says, "I told Donnie, 'I was kind of mad at you.'"

"Because of the affair?"

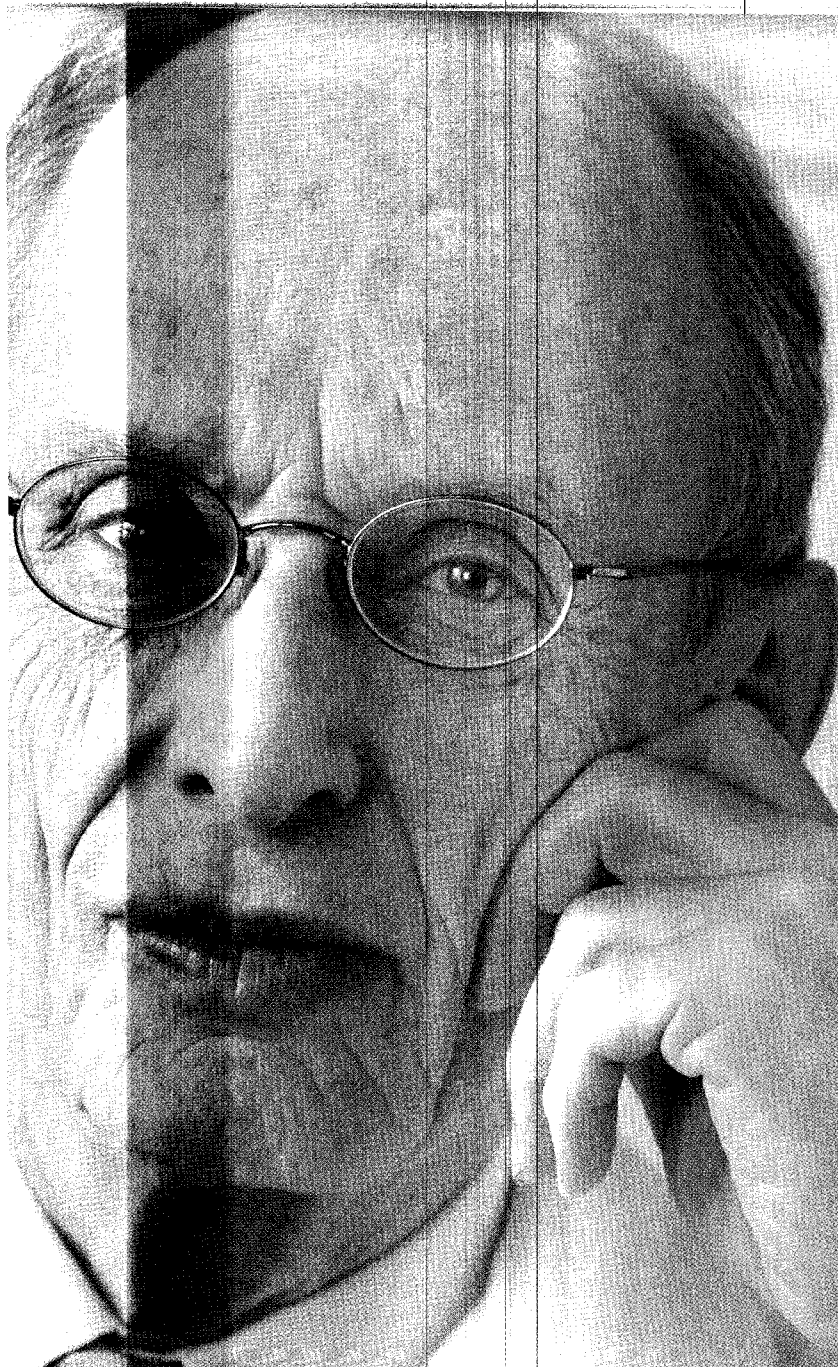
"I'm mad that we've still got illegal immigration," he replies. In any other race, Sherwood's scandal would likely be the central joke. In this unusual year, it's better to be an alleged strangler than a Bush puppet.

Staying down at the horsepull may be the best way for Sherwood to believe he's still in Donnie Country. During the ten minutes I spend at the GOP booth, only one person comes over to request Sherwood paraphernalia: an eager, mischievous-looking little boy who wants campaign balloons. As a staffer bends to inflate them, I look at the kid more closely. It is Chris Carney's son. ■

## Lieberman/Lamont gets nasty. Double Enmity

BY JASON ZENGERLE

**I**F THEY DIDN'T hate each other so much, David Sirota and Dan Gerstein might be friends. They certainly have a lot in common. Both are in their thirties. Both are Jewish. And both are Democratic operatives. But their greatest similarity is their shared love of vicious political combat. Sirota, a lanky 30-year-old who has worked on campaigns for Philadelphia mayor and Montana governor, once branded a political opponent a "No Talent Ass Clown." Gerstein, a thick-necked 39-year-old communications consultant and veteran Joe Lieberman aide, has been known to accuse those who disagree with him of being anti-Semites. Which is why, even by the no-holds-barred standards of a blog feud, the Gerstein v. Sirota smackdown was unusually nasty.



Some say depression is all in your head. Well, that's right. And wrong. It's right because depression is in the head, or more precisely, the brain. In fact, we've seen how it destroys the connections between brain cells.

### **Depression Is Real.**

But saying depression is all in your head is also wrong. There's nothing imaginary about depression. It's a serious, medical condition that affects every aspect of a person's health. And untreated depression kills thousands of Americans a year — through suicide and by intensifying the symptoms of life threatening illnesses such as cancer and heart disease.

### **Hope Is Real, Too.**

Today, research has identified many of the biological and environmental factors that contribute to depression. And medical science has developed effective treatments that can restore brain cell connections and lead to recovery. These treatments save lives. Depression is real. Fortunately, hope is real, too. To get the facts, please visit us at [DepressionIsReal.org](http://DepressionIsReal.org).

[ Dr. Paul Greengard 2000 Nobel Laureate in Medicine ]

“Every year, without any treatment at all,  
thousands stop suffering from depression.  
Because it kills them.”

[DepressionIsReal.org](http://DepressionIsReal.org)

American Psychiatric Foundation | Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance | League of United Latin American Citizens | National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Medical Association | National Mental Health Association | National Urban League

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The online flame-throwing started in July, when Gerstein accused Sirota, a vocal Lieberman detractor, of something unthinkable to his left-wing fan base—almost going to work for the Connecticut senator. “Yes, that’s right,” Gerstein taunted on a pro-Lieberman blog, “[t]he same guy who is viciously attacking Joe Lieberman as the great Satan of the Democratic Party actually sought not one but two jobs from the target of his hatred. ... The polite term for that would be chutzpah. Some one less charitable might call Sirota a fraud.” Sirota immediately shot back. On his eponymous blog, he pointed out that his dalliance with the Lieberman staff took place three years ago; that *they* solicited *him*; and that, after the interview, he told them he wasn’t interested. The experience, he revealed, was so odious that he “held [his] nose for a meeting with the notoriously arrogant Gerstein.” Perhaps concerned that he wasn’t making his real feelings clear, Sirota added that Gerstein is a “classic, haughty, self-important, professional election loser.” And the fight only got uglier from there, as the operatives lobbed charges at each other ranging from “rank hypocrisy” to being “an unabashed liar.”

The Gerstein-Sirota feud should have been just another rumble in the blogosphere, notable only for its combatants’ particular brand of mean-spiritedness. But recently the mêlée spilled over into the non-virtual world. That’s because in August, after Lieberman lost the Democratic primary to Ned Lamont, Gerstein was hired to serve as the communications director for Lieberman’s independent bid; and on Labor Day, after the Lamont campaign realized it needed some more political pros for the general election, Sirota was brought on board to help with its research and rapid response. Which means that the Lieberman-Lamont race—a race that is already plenty nasty—is likely to get only nastier, as the Gerstein-Sirota fight graduates to a larger ring.

**A**LTHOUGH HE IS nearly a decade younger than his rival, Sirota has a reputation for ruthlessness that would seem to make him the odds-on favorite. In 1999, he was fired from a Philadelphia mayoral campaign for being linked to a dirty trick: A friend of Sirota’s created a phony website for a rival campaign that featured some racially inflammatory language. (Sirota denies any direct involvement.) He then went to Washington, working for AIPAC and Vermont Representative Bernie Sanders before joining the Democratic staff of the House Appropriations Committee. There, he won acclaim for crafting well-researched, soundbite-filled attacks on the Bush administration that he e-mailed to fellow Democrats and journalists. In one, he mocked the now infamous “Mission Accomplished” speech, asking, “President Bush has time to take a water safety class and spend taxpayer money flying out to an aircraft carrier for a stunt photo-op?”

In 2004, Sirota joined Brian Schweitzer’s campaign for Montana governor, where he honed the research and

rapid-response skills that he will now put to use for Lamont. After a Republican group ran a TV ad featuring complaints from people who claimed they’d had bad business dealings with Schweitzer, Sirota, according to Schweitzer’s then-campaign manager, Eric Stern, “found out that one had a criminal record, one was heavily involved in Republican politics, and another had been investigated by the IRS.” Stern adds, “He really goes for the jugular.”

Sirota is equally skilled at self-promotion. “He’s a dial-a-quote—a left-wing populist version of Norm Ornstein,” says Ed Kilgore, a political operative with the Democratic Leadership Council, which has been a frequent target of Sirota’s blog broadsides. (Full disclosure: Sirota has also launched his fair share of attacks against *THE NEW REPUBLIC* and its writers, although he has not attacked me—yet.)

Two years ago, after Schweitzer’s victory, Sirota took up residence in Montana and began accessorizing his suits and sports jackets with oversized belt buckles and string ties. He refashioned his rhetoric as well, railing against the “Beltway Establishment” and the “Washington cocktail party circuit”—leaving at least one old D.C. acquaintance to ponder why he’d failed to notice Sirota’s proletarian misery as he sipped drinks alongside Alan Greenspan and Chris Matthews during a party at Maureen Dowd’s Georgetown house a few years earlier. Sirota, for his part, claims the Dowd party was a one-time, *Heart of Darkness*-like expedition.

Gerstein is safe from charges of having ever sipped or supped at MoDo’s. Over the last decade, the Connecticut native has been too busy doing Lieberman’s bidding. Gerstein began working for Connecticut’s junior senator in 1994 and stuck with him for the next ten years—playing a Zelig-like role in all of Lieberman’s major moments. Lieberman’s 1998 speech rebuking President Clinton for his dalliance with Monica Lewinsky? Gerstein helped write it. Lieberman’s turn as Al Gore’s running mate in 2000? Gerstein was his spokesman. And Lieberman’s ill-fated 2004 presidential campaign? Gerstein served as deputy communications director and was tasked with telling reporters, despite all evidence to the contrary, that the campaign was gaining “Joe-mentum.” Before reenlisting with Lieberman this summer, he ran a consulting firm in New York, a perch from which he penned a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed mulling the ability of Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid to “successfully fight a parking ticket, let alone the war against terrorism.”

Gerstein’s impact on the Lieberman campaign has been dramatic. He has sharpened Lieberman’s speeches so that they no longer meander or seek to avoid crucial and contentious issues, such as Lieberman’s support for the war in Iraq. And he’s pressured reporters to toughen their coverage of Lamont, personally peddling stories about Lamont’s past membership in an exclusive Greenwich country club and anti-Semitic comments from Lamont supporters on a MoveOn.org message board. “Dan is a tough streetfighter,” says Bill Andresen, Lieberman’s former chief of staff. “He can get in people’s faces and make

# [ A balanced energy approach ]



**As Americans talk** about our energy future, the conversation naturally turns to the need for future supplies to sustain a growing American economy. The federal Energy Information Administration (EIA) projects that even with a significant increase in energy efficiency and alternatives, Americans will still use 28 million barrels of oil a day in 2030 – a 34 percent increase from today.

Where will we get that oil? We need to have a balanced energy approach. We should look first here at home. The government estimates some 31 billion barrels of undiscovered, technically recoverable oil are available on federal lands currently closed to development. That's more than enough oil to power 35 million cars and heat 14 million homes for 30 years.

A Message From

**America's Oil & Natural Gas Industry**

To learn more, visit [www.api.org](http://www.api.org)

© 2006 API

sure they do what he thinks they ought to do.”

This, of course, doesn't always endear him to those who cover Lieberman. “He's a master of sustained fake outrage,” complains one reporter. “He won't break character, which makes him very unpleasant to deal with.” And Gerstein's pugilistic nature can sometimes land him in hot water. In response to a commenter's question on the Lieberman campaign's blog about a news report that the GOP has steered money to Lieberman, Gerstein blustered, “What's next, you want us to provide evidence that Joe Lieberman doesn't beat his wife?” Which subsequently forced Gerstein to issue the sort of statement no campaign spokesman ever wants to make: “Joe Lieberman does NOT beat his wife.”

**N**OW THAT GERSTEIN has an official position with the Lieberman campaign, he's pledging to take the high road in his feud with Sirota. “I'm not going to make this personal about David,” he told me—before plunging right back into the mud pit with a comment about how “it's sort of interesting that the Lamont campaign said they weren't going to hire any outside operatives and now they bring in David Sirota. ... It's just another hypocrisy for them.”

Sirota doesn't even feint in the direction of the high road. He's practically giddy about the fact that any shots he takes against Gerstein will now have the added bonus of hitting Lieberman as well. “The Lieberman campaign has been more bombastic and caustic and nasty [since Gerstein joined it],” he told me over the phone from Montana, as he prepared for his move to Connecticut. “I really do believe that he's hurt the campaign's credibility with the media and the public.”

And the issue of exactly how deep Sirota's connections to Dark Lord Lieberman were three years ago has remained a serious bone of contention. Early this month, Sirota dug up a chain of e-mail correspondence between him and Lieberman's office documenting that he did indeed cut off discussions with the Lieberman camp after one interview—and that he was not rejected by Lieberman, as Gerstein has claimed. On his blog, under the headline “HERE IT IS: THE INDISPUTABLE PROOF LIEBERMAN'S CAMPAIGN LIES,” Sirota posted the e-mail exchange, accused Gerstein of libel, and, lest anyone think he was merely grinding a personal ax, mused on “the bigger political sense” of the whole affair. “Why,” Sirota wrote, “does Joe Lieberman, a man of supposed ‘principle’ who is supposedly pursuing a ‘new politics of unity and purpose’ allow someone with such disdain for the truth like Gerstein to publicly represent him?”

Gerstein wouldn't directly answer Sirota's question. “I have never told one lie about David Sirota,” he replied, quickly pivoting to try to reframe the dispute. “This is one of the problems with the Lamont people. They make wild accusations about lies when they don't even know what a lie is.” In an e-mail, Gerstein was even more blunt. “THIS PROVES NOTHING,” he wrote, “OTHER THAN SIROTA HAS GONE OFF THE DEEP END.” ■

## The Iran Plan. Peace Now

BY LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

**O**VER THE LAST few months, a near-consensus has emerged in the press about the prospects for war with Iran: Here we go again. In *The New Yorker*, Seymour Hersh reports that the Bush administration has “intensified planning for a possible major air attack.” This week, a *Time* cover story concludes that “a much discussed—but until now largely theoretical—prospect has become real: that the U.S. may be preparing for war with Iran.”

There is an undeniable logic behind these stories. The Bush administration, after all, invaded Iraq in search of a nuclear program that turned out not to exist; in Iran, a fanatical regime presides over a nuclear program that, by its own admission, does exist. But the portrait of an administration bent on war is, at best, premature. The rationale for military action against Iran exists. But, for now and probably into next year, the momentum on the Bush team belongs with diplomats keen to avoid it.

**A**T THE MOMENT, Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns counts as the principal architect and sole manager of Iran policy. A Foreign Service officer for over two decades and one of Foggy Bottom's smoothest bureaucratic operators, Burns makes for an unlikely point man in the Bush team's campaign against a member of the axis of evil. With his thin face, meticulously chosen words, and expressionless demeanor, Burns would be a casting director's choice to play a Foreign Service officer (and was, in fact, a State Department spokesman during the Clinton administration). Aides on John Kerry's presidential campaign touted him as their favorite diplomat; administration hard-liners see him, in the words of one, as “the man from the Council on Foreign Relations.”

Burns acquired the Iran portfolio as much by default as by design. Three years of war have sucked the oxygen out of the White House: When a European leader recently broached the question of what to do about Iran, a foreign source close to the politician says, Bush responded that he's focused almost exclusively on Iraq. As for the State Department's newly christened Iranian Affairs Office—whose activities have been adduced as evidence of an administration girding for war—its staffers brainstorm about how to promote democracy and have no say on the question of military action. Meanwhile, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has largely marginalized Foggy Bottom's senior-most hard-liners—Under Secretary Robert Joseph and U.N. Amba-

sador John Bolton—on the Iran question.

Although he's anything but a hard-liner himself, colleagues say Burns has few illusions that the United Nations will take meaningful action against Iran. Instead, he and Treasury Under Secretary Stuart Levey have been pressing European diplomats to block Iran's access to their financial institutions; last week, they succeeded in blocking even indirect links between one of Iran's largest banks and the U.S. financial system. One State Department official predicts the campaign could eventually escalate to the point of attempting to strangle Iran's access to global markets—the logic being that supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and not President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, holds the levers of power and could be swayed by temporal considerations.

**S**O WHAT HAS become of the Iran hawks? The media's Iraq template, which imagines hard-liners at the Pentagon and vice president's office battling against the State Department for control of Iran policy, doesn't quite apply. Which isn't to say the former boast no influence: Last year, Dick Cheney exacted a pledge from the Europeans to refer Iran to the U.N. Security Council in the event that their negotiations with Tehran went nowhere. But Burns enjoys Rice's full backing; and Rice, unlike former Secretary of State Colin Powell, enjoys the president's full backing.

Moreover, Cheney aides see no inherent incompatibility between the State Department's track and their own, for the simple reason that they believe the diplomatic track will fail. Because the president plans to go the last mile in the name of mollifying the Europeans—and, unlike the run-up to the Iraq war, the diplomatic string on Iran could run for up to two years—administration hard-liners reason that, if Bush tires of the kabuki, he can switch to the military track with little lost.

That track is only now being constructed, mostly in the office of Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Eric Edelman and at Central Command (CENTCOM) headquarters in Tampa, Florida. Where his predecessor Douglas Feith presided over the Office of Special Plans during the run-up to the Iraq war, Edelman, a longtime Cheney protégé, now presides over a newly established Iran directorate at the Pentagon. But there the similarities end. The office's assessments—regarding, among other things, how Iran might retaliate—may come into play in the future. But, thus far, the Pentagon has virtually no say in Iran deliberations. “They’ve been completely shut out,” says a senior official, who adds that Burns and Rice will “have the final say until [the president] says, ‘enough.’”

Further evidence of the remoteness of military action comes from CENTCOM, where General John Abizaid only recently asked his staff to analyze the potential consequences of a strike against Iran. The catalogue of possibilities makes for a sobering read: attacks against oil installations in friendly Gulf states, the unleashing of Hezbollah against U.S. targets throughout the region and beyond, a blockade

of the Strait of Hormuz, the destruction of the U.S. enterprise in Iraq. It is this last consequence, more than any other, which leaves many senior officers deeply wary of the military option. The Iranians, says one military planner, “could burn the country down around us if they wanted to.”

**W**HILE THE bureaucratic maneuvering runs counter to predictions of imminent war, the longer-term logic of military action is real enough. Even officials who place their faith in the sanctions route concede that Iran's overconfidence could lead to miscalculation. All the more so because the man presiding over Tehran's game of chicken impresses some members of the Bush team as being, in the words of one, “out of his fucking mind.” Moreover, the Iranian leadership's taste for brinkmanship extends beyond Ahmadinejad himself. Ray Takeyh, an Iran specialist at the Council on Foreign Relations, says, “Iran's leadership, and that includes Khamenei, thinks America has been weakened so much in Iraq that, even if it wanted to, Washington couldn't act militarily.” (That this assumption rests on a flimsy foundation—no one in the administration has even contemplated a ground war, but rather other options like naval interdictions or a massive air strike—seems not to have occurred to Iran's leaders.)

Then, too, the Security Council's unwillingness to contemplate a robust sanctions regime may actually tip the odds in favor of military action. “The Europeans won't do anything that would lose the Chinese and the Russians [at the Security Council],” says a senior administration official. Even assuming a newly vigilant China and Russia, the odds seem slight that sanctions would persuade Iran to forfeit its nuclear program. Bush advisers say they see Tehran's leadership, not unlike Pakistan's when it flouted sanctions during its own drive to acquire nuclear weapons, as motivated by concerns having nothing to do with commercial ties.

But the most powerful argument for eventual action rests with President Bush. “The Iranians may be feeling their oats, and they may think the administration is back on its heels,” says Thomas Donnelly, a defense expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, “but they're misreading American policy, the amount of strike power we have, and, most of all, President Bush himself.” While Rice, with one eye to the Europeans, has convinced the president to give diplomacy a chance, Bush has also vowed privately not to leave office with Iran's nuclear program intact. An adviser who has discussed the subject with the president says, “[Bush's] response is visceral; he's adamant: ‘They won't have nukes.’” Says an official familiar with Bush's thinking on Iran: “If Rice and Burns don't get results, at some point—it could be a year from now—the president's going to tell the Europeans, ‘You've had your chance.’”

One way or another, they insist, the matter will be settled before Bush leaves office. But perhaps not that long before. ■

## Syria gets religion. Clerical Era

BY ANDREW LEE BUTTERS

**S**HORTLY AFTER I arrived in Damascus this summer, I dropped by the offices of Dr. Mohammed Al Habash, one of Syria's leading religious scholars, to interview him about the rise of Islam in his country. But the Danes beat me to him. Habash's Islamic Studies Center was hosting the first official Danish delegation to travel to Syria since a mob, infuriated by the publication of cartoons of the Prophet in a Danish newspaper, had attacked and burned the Danish Embassy in February. On this more pleasant occasion, Syrian and Danish clerics and scholars traded papers and business cards, and almost everyone acknowledged that Christians and Muslims had lived side by side in Syria for hundreds of years. Then, the Danes left the area under close protection.

In general, Syria is a welcoming place—as long as you're not Danish or Israeli. There are plenty of imams like Habash who preach brotherhood and peace, and plenty of cab drivers with cousins in Michigan. But there's also an angry religious sentiment growing in the country, fueled by what Syrians see as Western atrocities in the Middle East: the U.S. occupation of Iraq, the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the Syrian Golan, and the recent Israeli bombardment of Lebanon.

For the Syrian Baath regime, this poses a particular dilemma. The battles being fought to protect Arabs from imperialism and Zionism aren't being waged by the Syrian state. They are being fought by holy warriors: Al Qaeda in Iraq, Hamas in Palestine, Hezbollah in Lebanon. The rise of these Islamic standard-bearers, moreover, has coincided with a series of embarrassments for the regime: the ongoing U.N. criminal investigation into last year's assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, the forced withdrawal of Syrian soldiers from Lebanon, the talk in Washington of regime change.

Surrounded by enemies and facing a restless public, the Syrian government has begun taking up religion. Earlier this year, about the same time that U.N. investigators were asking to interrogate Syrian President Bashar Al Assad, billboards began appearing around Damascus with a photograph of the president admonishing his countrymen in Arabic and English: SYRIANS BOW ONLY TO GOD. What makes this kind of religious rhetoric significant is that Syria's Baathist regime has been ruthlessly irreligious for most of its history. And with good reason: Its secular ruling class is largely composed of an Alawi Muslim minority, in a country that is about 75 percent Sunni Muslim.

**T**HE SUNNIFICATION OF Syria has been evident for some time. You can see it in Damascus, where it's getting harder to find restaurants that serve alcohol outside of the Christian Quarter and a few well-to-do neighborhoods. The wealthy and well-connected have figured out which way the wind is blowing and are writing checks to Islamic charities. And, at the border crossings to Jordan and Lebanon, the long lines of women in black make you feel like you're on a pilgrimage to Mecca.

But this year was a turning point in the regime's relationship with religion. For the first time since the Baath Party took power in 1963, the government allowed Syrians to openly celebrate the Prophet's birthday in April. The president himself prayed publicly on the occasion, even though, just a few days earlier, he had been conspicuously absent from a ceremony marking the anniversary of the Baath Party's founding. Symbolic gestures like these have been followed by more practical ones that have slowly relaxed state controls over religious institutions, for example, allowing Islamic education to take place in mosques.

The new coziness between mosque and state crystallized in my mind when I visited the Grand Mufti Ahmed Badr Al Deen Hassoun, Syria's head holy man, at his offices in the ministry for religious endowments. On the wall was a photograph of the mufti and the president. This wouldn't have been so surprising—muftis are, after all, presidential appointees—except this particular picture showed the president kissing the Koran. Later, as I was about to ask His Holiness about the recent landmark meeting between senior Syrian clerics and senior military chiefs, in walked an Air Force lieutenant general, who introduced himself as Mohammed and took a seat on the sofa across from us. Though the military has long been the most enthusiastic enforcer of Syrian secularism, the general cheerfully mentioned that the grand mufti was a great friend, with whom he prayed every Friday and from whom he sought advice on all matters. The mufti smiled like a turbaned cheshire cat.

**T**HIS TILT TOWARD Mecca has obvious benefits for the Syrian government: Now that the lure of pan-Arab socialism has vanished into history, God can replace it as a rallying point against the West. (There are obvious parallels to the Islamic rhetoric that came out of Baghdad in the final years of Saddam Hussein's embattled Baathist regime.) But it also has dangers. The last time Syrians mixed religion and politics, in the 1980s, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood began a terrorist war against the state, which ended only when the government practically destroyed one of its own cities, Hama.

This time around, the Syrian government is trying something different: It is promoting a particular brand of moderate Islam. That's where Habash and a number of other regime-friendly clerics like the grand mufti come in handy. Habash, who is also a member of the Syrian parliament, is

*Andrew Lee Butters is a writer based in Beirut.*

# Life



**Take the mystery out  
of planning for "if."**

**Let's shed some light on life insurance.**

For every "if" in life, there's a solution. Like protecting your family with life insurance. Choosing the right coverage doesn't have to be as costly, complicated or mysterious as you may think. MetLife is the largest provider of life insurance in the U.S. Our representatives help sort through your choices to build on what you already have and adjust for your growing needs. Starting with your existing coverage, we'll collaborate with you to fill in the gaps and help you create your personal safety net. Demystifying life insurance is as simple as calling on our expertise. Together we can make a plan for "if."

**Call 1-888-MetLife or visit [metlife.com](http://metlife.com).**

**Guarantees for the if in life.**

**MetLife®**

**have you met life today?®**

Guarantees apply to certain insurance (not securities and investment and advisory) products and are subject to product terms, conditions, exclusions and limitations and the insurer's claims-paying ability and financial strength. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York, NY 10166. MetLife Investors USA Insurance Company, Irvine, CA 92614. MetLife and its affiliates are the largest life insurance organization in the U.S. based on the in-force life insurance. 2005 AM Best. © 2006 MetLife, Inc. PEANUTS © UFS, Inc. L0608AW5A(exp1208) ENT-LD

the leading theologian behind a movement called Renewal Islam, which advocates a whole-scale reinterpretation of Islam for the modern era by emphasizing the diversity within Muslim doctrine and traditions. Habash—whose business suits, suave English, and trim beard make him the very model of the modern major media mullah—explained to me that, although Renewal Islam types like himself represent just 20 percent of practicing Muslims in Syria, they have an important resource to draw on: the country's long tradition as a center of Sufism.

In Habash's telling, there are two great strains within Sunni Islam: Wahhabism and Sufism. For Habash, the crucial distinction between the two is that the orthodoxy of Wahhabism says that Islam and the Koran have a monopoly on spiritual authority and that their meaning was fixed for all time somewhere back in the tenth century; the heterodoxy of Sufism, by contrast, holds that there are many paths to the same God. "Sufi understanding can help defend us against a Wahhabbi direction and point us in a Renewal direction," he said.

This is the kind of thing Habash and his allies say when they go on Syrian state television, and soon they'll be able to say it on a channel of their own. Sham TV, Syria's first privately owned TV station, will probably launch by the end of the year. The station, named after an archaic Arabic term for Syria, is backed by moderate Islamists and will devote 20 percent of its programming to religious material. There are also rumors that the Baath Party will soon allow moderate Islamists to form their own political party. As it stands now, the government bans all parties except those in the Baath-led National Progressive Front, none of which are religious.

But the fact that Renewal Islam is getting state support could be a sign that it's just another declining industry in Syria's command economy. When I went to prayers one Friday at the Damascus mosque where Habash preaches, I didn't get the sense that I was at the epicenter of a religious renaissance. The mosque was friendly enough, its cool white walls and pink rugs a pleasant refuge from the midday summer sun. And, after the sermon, a group of mosque elders graciously invited me and a couple of other foreign visitors to tea. But it quickly became clear that Habash's congregation felt they were stranded survivors in a rising fundamentalist tide caused by U.S. support for Israel and the occupation of Iraq. "You have no idea about the anger in the streets over American policy," an English teacher told me. "If the government cannot control it, it will be impossible for people like us. One day, instead of Mohammed Habash in Syria, you will have a Mohammed bin Laden."

Habash, who said he has been targeted for assassination by an Al Qaeda website, takes the threat of rising Islamic radicalism seriously. "If just 1 or 2 percent of Syria is radical," he said, "that's still about 100,000 or 200,000 people." Of course, it suits the Syrian government and its moderate religious allies to be seen as holding the line against Al Qaeda and its fellow travelers. But there are signs that the Syrian security services are legitimately worried about rising Islamist anger.

For one thing, the government appears to have stemmed

the flow of insurgents into Iraq. The United States admitted as much last year. One former jihadi, who had gone to fight the Americans in 2003 but is now a news presenter at a Damascus TV station, told me that, while the younger men in his home village outside of Aleppo are even more eager to fight than he was—"They want to cut the heads off American soldiers... this is extreme. I think American soldiers should be shot with guns"—the Syrian government wasn't letting them go.

The government is also cracking down on the sale of songs and videos that support the resistance against the United States in Iraq. The country used to be awash in them, but, when I went shopping for some one day in Damascus, I came away empty-handed. The DVD merchants said state security had confiscated all their copies. "The government doesn't want people to watch them and get frustrated," one shopkeeper said.

But that frustration may just be going underground. The one jihadi music video that I saw—a friend showed it to me on his mobile phone—was for a song titled "The Battle of Falluja." The footage was typical stock of Americans in Humvees and mujahedeen in pickups, but the music was more interesting: Sufi-style chanting and drumming. The singer's accent, my friend said, was from the Euphrates valley, somewhere in the border region between Iraq and Syria. And the lyrics were pure Sufi poetry: "My heart is a palm tree in Tikrit / It gives great praise to the fighters of Falluja / who write history with bullets."

THE MYSTICS, it seems, have turned militant. So I asked a Syrian friend from the Euphrates valley to make a reporting trip on my behalf to his hometown near the Iraqi border. (Pink-faced foreign correspondents can't just wander around eastern Syria asking questions about jihad.) He returned a few days later with a story about how Sufi prayer circles, where men in trance-like states impale themselves on swords and allow themselves be bitten by snakes, have turned into forums for expressing anger at the U.S. occupation and massacres committed by militias loyal to Iraq's Shia-led government. "Refugee families want us to sing about Sufi shrines in Iraq, to protect them from destruction by the Americans and the Shia," a Sufi sheik told my friend. "Many fighters return from Iraq and want us to remember their struggle in our songs."

The Sufis with whom my friend spoke weren't yet angry with their own government for not supporting the insurgency, in part because they know Syria is surrounded by hostile powers. But it remains to be seen how much longer the government can count on Sufi quiescence. As refugees from the latest Lebanon war poured into Syria over the summer, feelings were running high for the government to join Hezbollah in a fight it almost certainly would have lost. How long before the warrior poets of the East become angry at a government that won't let them fight? One day, perhaps, I'll find myself listening to a Sufi song that runs: "My heart is a palm tree in Damascus." ■

The coming resource war.

# Crude Awakening

BY JOSHUA KURLANTZICK

**E**ARLIER THIS YEAR, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad arrived in China—and quickly made himself at home. The occasion was a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a regional group linking China, Russia, and Central Asia. During the summit, Ahmadinejad seemed to be everywhere. He posed, arms linked, with Russian and Chinese officials, who said nothing as he called for “impartial and independent experts” to investigate whether the Holocaust happened. He delivered a major address broadcast on Chinese state television. He touted Moscow, Tehran, and Beijing’s “identical” views on world issues. And he proposed making “the SCO into a strong and influential economic, political, and trade institution [to] thwart the threat of domineering powers.” One can guess which domineering power he had in mind.

Ahmadinejad’s Shanghai strategy signals a potentially momentous change in the international system—a change overshadowed by the war on terrorism. In four key regions of the globe—East Asia, the former Soviet Union, the Middle East, and Latin America—a toxic combination of factors has created a new, fluid alliance of nations that could potentially oppose the United States and other democracies. In the past five years, each of these regions have witnessed rising nationalism and anti-Americanism, the result of greater domestic confidence and clumsy U.S. foreign policy. In all four regions, countries that have flirted with democracy since 1989 have begun to turn their backs on it. And, in all four regions, authoritarian governments have a new weapon, one potentially more powerful than nukes or suicide bombers: oil.

Three of these regions contain major oil exporters, while China, thanks to its powerhouse economy, is now the world’s second-largest oil consumer, behind the United States. China’s appetite gives these countries an alternative to the United States and other democratic oil-guzzling customers—and thereby holds this loose alliance together.

As Middle East experts Flynt Leverett and Pierre Noel note in a fascinating recent *National Interest* article, with their power, confidence, and common interest in oil, the members of this new alliance probably will ensure that Iran obtains nuclear capacity. And Iran could be only the beginning. This alliance of authoritarian regimes—Leverett and Noel, along with others like economist Irwin Stelzer, call it an “axis of oil”—could pose the most serious threat to the United States and its democratic allies since the collapse of the Soviet empire.

Unlike the Soviet Union, however, this axis does not offer a comprehensive ideological alternative to the United States comparable to communism; indeed, many of its member countries have embraced elements of capitalism, while using very different political models. Instead, the world has returned to an earlier system, one reminiscent of the early twentieth century, when ideology was not paramount but new powers like Germany and Japan developed flexible alliances to win resources and to weaken Great Britain, the world’s strongest country at the time. Welcome to a new era of resource nationalism.

**L**ESS THAN A decade ago, most policymakers thought oil’s viability as a weapon had gone out with skinny ties and the Electric Light Orchestra. In 1999, when oil prices hovered around \$15 per barrel, *The Economist* headlined one article, “DROWNING IN OIL.” Its prediction—that “[t]he world is awash with the stuff, and it is likely to remain so”—was wrong. Today, energy industry analysts worry that production won’t be able to keep up with growing demand. The International Energy Agency believes global energy demand will grow between 37 and 50 percent by 2030. Already, the inflation-adjusted



price of oil has quadrupled in the past five years. And even the fabled Saudi oil reserves are under stress.

The demand for oil—and gas, too—is skyrocketing largely because of rising consumption in China and India, which have vast populations only beginning to climb the economic ladder. China alone accounted for 30 percent of the increase in world demand in 2004 and will eventually overtake the United States as the world's biggest oil consumer—marking a change at the top of the world oil market for the first time in decades.

Increasingly, this oil and gas will be concentrated in the hands of producers from the Middle East, the former Soviet Union, and Latin America—not in democracies like Norway, the United Kingdom, or the United States. The output of the North Sea is believed to have peaked, and America's domestic oil production has been declining for over 20 years. Russia and Iran possess the world's largest natural gas reserves.

Five years ago—before Hu Jintao took over, Vladimir Putin consolidated control, and many of Latin America's leaders came to power—Western nations at least could hope that these oil producers and China, the major oil consumer, were slowly becoming like Norway: stable, pro-American democracies. Only a willfully blind person could say the same today. In China, stunning economic growth since the introduction of market reforms in the early '80s has failed to produce the politically free society that many scholars once foresaw. In Russia, Putin has gutted the Duma, tightened control over the electoral process, and eviscerated Russian non-governmental organizations. Democracy is faltering in Latin America, the Middle East, and many former Soviet republics as well. Despite the color revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia, the past year has been a good one for Central Asian and Caucasian autocrats. The pseudo-authoritarian ruling party in Azerbaijan remains in power after winning a rigged election last year. Kazakhstan's president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, has further tightened his authoritarian grip. Liberalism has also faced recent setbacks in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and even Ukraine. In the Middle East, recent glimmers of greater freedom in Egypt and Syria have disappeared. And populist leaders—some with minimal commitment to democracy—now run Venezuela, Bolivia, and other Latin American countries.

In some cases, public opinion—at least as far as we can measure—seems to tolerate these rulers. According to a 2005 Pew poll, more than 70 percent of Chinese say they are satisfied with conditions in their nation. Putin boasts favorable ratings of over 70 percent in independent polling. In Latin America, many citizens seem disillusioned with liberal democracy. The neoliberal economic model touted by the United States failed to deliver growth in the region during the 1990s, a time when much of Latin America also democratized. As a result, many Latin Americans came to associate both democracy and economic liberalization with rising poverty. It's no surprise, then, that one recent study showed lukewarm support for democracy, with over 50 percent of

Latin Americans surveyed agreeing with the statement, "I wouldn't mind if a nondemocratic government came to power if it could solve economic problems."

Public opinion in these countries doesn't just support autocracy. It also opposes the United States. And since authoritarian leaders have their own reasons to fear the United States—namely the threat to their rule posed by Washington's democratization push—they are more than happy to encourage anti-American sentiments and to act on them. The numbers tell the story. A recent Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) survey revealed that only 25 percent of Russians think the United States is having a positive impact on the world, while a similar PIPA study found that only 22 percent of Chinese have a positive view of the United States. One Zogby International study of Latin Americans found that more than 80 percent dislike how the United States handles international relations. Another Zogby study reported that people in nearly every Arab nation lowered their opinion of the United States between 2002 and 2005.

Much of this is likely attributable to anger surrounding Bush's controversial foreign policy and U.S.-led globalization. But specific geopolitical grievances have also exacerbated these resentments, fostering nationalism and pushing countries to look for relationships that do not involve Washington. Russians fear the expansion of NATO and the work of U.S.-funded pro-democracy NGOs in former Soviet republics. "The U.S. has created a circle around Russia," Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov complained to foreign journalists. In China, scholars with close government links told me that Beijing fears that the U.S. presence in Afghanistan—combined with America's closer ties to Singapore, India, and Japan—is part of a strategy to ring China with military forces. In Latin America, many people remain angry that Bush, who when first elected vowed to make the region his top priority, has almost completely ignored his southern neighbors. And, in the Middle East, where Iraq dominates the news, one study by Mamoun Fandy of Rice University found that "Arabs seem frightened by the prospect of a unipolar [world] led by the United States."

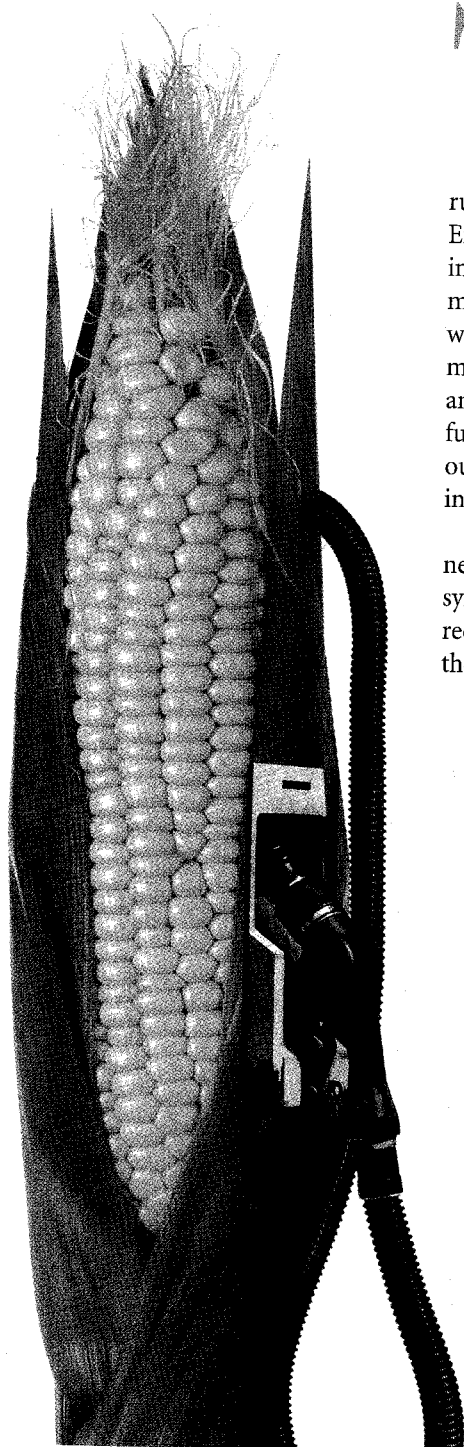
As public opinion toward the United States has turned sour, China's popularity has shown strength. One PIPA poll found that Russians have a broadly positive view of China's economic system, government, and worldwide influence. Meanwhile, Fandy's study showed that Arabs "find in Beijing a counter-weight" to American power.

**W**ITH OIL BECOMING increasingly valuable, these authoritarian-leaning, anti-American states have taken a mercantilist view of the world. They do not follow the classic mercantilism of the eighteenth century, when nations believed power rested solely on amassing state resources and protecting their economies. China's economy, after all, is open, and Russia seeks to become a full member of the World

*continued on page 25*

ENERGY AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

INNOVATIONS IN ENERGY:

A Promising Array  
of Fuel Technologies

The pressure is on — and America is responding. It's not just high-spiraling oil prices but also record demand that is spurring the rush of innovation we are seeing today. Energy companies are accelerating investment in research and development; what's more, they are teaming with each other and the U.S. government to develop new and better fuels and energy technologies to sustain our fuel-hungry American infrastructure — our buildings, homes, automobiles, and industries.

The key to widespread adoption of new fuels and technologies lies in a synergy of public awareness, legislative requirements and the availability of these alternative technologies. And so,

Amidst record fuel prices, Americans may worry that their nation is the world's largest per capita consumer of energy. But they should take heart: their country is also a global leader in energy innovation.

the success of new technologies will hinge in large part not just on technical breakthroughs but political ones, too: How the market continues to react to fuel prices, the risks that companies will take — and the steps government will take to mitigate them — as well as public support for change.

Clearly, an over-reliance on any single energy source is a potential vulnerability to the long-term security of our energy supply. In keeping with America's varied approach, research and development are going on simultaneously on many fronts, fostering a diversity of promising options for the future.

**Innovations in Oil: Cleaner Technologies**

Advances in technology are making oil and gas exploration and drilling both cleaner and more productive. Drilling rigs can now produce two to four times more oil and gas per well than they could 20 years ago, according to the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Fossil Energy.

Improved exploration technologies, including seismic sensing and satellite surveying, now make it less likely that oil and gas wells will be dry, thereby reducing the number of wells and the associated environmental damage.

One such technology is Denver, CO-based Luff Exploration's Intelligent Computing System. The ICS is designed to help drillers pick ideal drilling sites — those with maximum

*continued*

reservoir potential and low risk of dry holes. ICS analysis helped Luff convert 16 vertical wells to horizontals, increasing production 10-fold without the environmental damage associated with new drilling.

Horizontal wells allow drillers to do more with each well — according to the Department of Energy, “Multiple completions from the same wellbore, extending like the spokes of a wheel, can reach different oil and gas production zones and avoid disturbing surface ecosystems.”<sup>1</sup>

Another environmentally friendly technique — microhole drilling. The overall goal of microholes is to reduce the drilling footprint and protect sensitive areas. Alaska’s NANA Project uses only 3.5 inch borehole drills and all equipment can be transported by helicopter to drilling sites, eliminating the need to build roads. Los Alamos National Laboratory and the Rocky Mountain Oilfield Testing Center are aiming for even smaller bores, developing a program for drilling wells with diameters of less than 3 inches.

The bottom line — while oil may not be ‘green,’ advances in drilling and prospecting technology are leading to less environmental damage and a more sustainable future supply of petroleum-based fuels.

## Beyond Petroleum

In an ongoing effort to improve automotive energy technology, the U.S. Department of Energy established the FreedomCAR and Fuel Partnership with leading private energy and automotive companies, including BP, Chevron, DaimlerChrysler, Ford, and General Motors. The partnership aims to create more energy efficient transportation technologies that will make it possible for average consumers to choose what type of energy they want to use.

With the assistance of government help — in petroleum gas, natural gas, biodiesel, ethanol and more — corporations can now focus on the high-risk, expensive research and development necessary to develop new fuel technologies — technologies designed to provide

### Advances are being explored across an array of fuel and technology arenas:

- Petroleum
- Biodiesel
- Ethanol
- Hydrogen
- Fuel cells
- Liquefied Petroleum Gas
- Natural Gas
- Coal to Liquid

Americans with greater mobility, energy security, lower costs and reduced negative impact on the environment.

## Liquefied Petroleum Gas

Some alternative fuel technologies are already on the road today.

The Energy Department reports that liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) — or propane, as it is commonly known — is the most common alternative fuel used in America today. It is a low emission fossil fuel — and since LPG fuel systems were developed to be tightly closed, vehicles tend to have about one-third less emissions.

About 55 percent of the nation’s LPG comes from natural gas purification, while the remaining 45 percent is derived from crude oil refinement.<sup>2</sup> The major energy companies, including BP, Chevron, and Exxon Mobile, locally produce 90 percent of the LPG used in the U.S., helping bolster the domestic economy.

Although some automobile companies have released LPG vehicles, like Ford’s Falcon LPG, many opt not to since gasoline vehicles can easily and inexpensively be converted into LPG vehicles.<sup>3</sup> In fact, conversion kits like those sold by Hendrix Industrial Gastrux, include all required regulators, monitors, feed back circuitry, and a special fuel tank.

LPG or propane has the clear infrastructure advantage: nationwide, there are more than three thousand public

LPG fueling stations,<sup>4</sup> and with efforts from corporations, such as CleanFuelUSA, to build more, this number is expected to increase.

## Natural Gas

Natural gas is already powering city fleets, like buses and trucks, in major cities such as Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and New York.

The fuel that heats our homes and cooks our food has a proven record of excellence as a vehicle fuel. With vast reserves in the continental U.S., natural gas is a well-positioned alternative to petroleum gasoline.

Burning more cleanly than petroleum or diesel fuel,<sup>5</sup> natural gas is able to reduce emissions of carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and particulate matter that are harmful to the environment. In addition, natural gas is clean-burning; this tends to lower general maintenance costs and permits engine adjustments that maximize fuel economy.

The promise of natural gas as a cost-effective fuel has led to the successful production of a variety of vehicles including cars, trucks, buses, and haulers. DaimlerChrysler, GM, Honda, and Toyota all make natural gas vehicles, though Ford opted out of production in order to concentrate on hybrids.<sup>6</sup>

Most natural gas vehicles, like those mentioned above, run on compressed natural gas (CNG) which poses problems for storage. Researchers at BP are finding that cooled CNG, or liquid natural gas (LNG), provides all the benefits of CNG without the limitations. These advancements will allow vehicles to travel much further on natural gas.

## Ethanol

Ethanol is the newest favorite alternative fuel of American automakers and, blended with gasoline, is powering American drivers right now.

A 200-proof alcohol similar to the alcohol found in whiskey, wine, and beer, ethanol performs as an excellent automotive fuel. Ethanol produces no net carbon dioxide emissions, making it very eco-friendly. In fact, more carbon dioxide is removed during crop growth

than is released as emissions with ethanol fuel.

By simply blending gasoline with as little as 10 percent ethanol (E10), harmful emissions can be reduced by 25 percent.<sup>7</sup> In compliance with the 1992 Energy Policy Act, fuel manufacturers now offer 85 percent (E85) and 95 percent (E95) blends.

"Flexible fuel" vehicles can run on E85, gasoline, or any combination of the two, offering an affordable, environmentally friendly alternative to pure gasoline. All major U.S. automakers offer affordable cars, vans, and light-trucks that are ethanol compatible. In fact, GM recently introduced its E85 Daytona Racing Truck as part of its "Live Green, Go Yellow" campaign. Ford has also introduced a series of E85 vehicles, including a full-size pickup truck.

Additionally, as part of the Energy Department's Fuel Partnership, the government has been developing an ethanol-based or "E-diesel" for heavy-duty vehicles. Archer Daniels Midland and John Deere both participate in this experimental research and development.

### Biodiesel

Producing fewer polluting emissions than gasoline, biodiesel is considered by many to be a leading way to protect the environment from the natural chemical breakdown of petroleum fuels in storage tanks and humans from the effects of diesel exhaust.

Made from soybean oil and "yellow grease," biodiesel is as biodegradable as sugar, and ten times less toxic than table salt.<sup>8</sup> It also degrades four times faster than petroleum-based diesel fuels,<sup>9</sup> making it safer to handle and transport. Like all biofuels, biodiesel takes advantage of the energy content of plants. By relying on a natural process like photosynthesis, fuel producers are able to reduce the car-

cinogenic properties of fuel by up to 94 percent.<sup>10</sup>

One of biodiesel's most promising future roles is as a fuel additive for marine or commercial vehicles, like trucks and buses. Federal fleet vehicles, for example, now use biodiesel blends in their diesel engines. Collaborative production of biodiesel is accelerating: in fact, Chevron's new Biodiesel Business Unit recently partnered with Galveston Bay Biodiesel. With a production and distribution facility that will double biodiesel production in the U.S.,<sup>11</sup> GBB hopes to take advantage of the 'green' trend by producing both pure and blended biodiesel.

### Fuel cells

Further into the future are technologies that promise to emit no tailpipe exhaust of any kind.

Still in developmental infancy, fuel cells have the potential to power cars, trucks, and buses without any kind of exhaust. Vehicles powered by fuel cells will be cleaner than those powered by internal combustion engines, since the cells harness the chemical energy of hydrogen and oxygen to generate electricity without combustion or pollution.<sup>12</sup>

The only by-products of fuel cells are pure water and potentially useful heat, according to the Energy Department. Flexibility is also high — since fuel cells can run on hydrogen or any processed hydrogen-rich liquid or gas, vehicles can

run on a whole range of fossil fuels — gasoline, natural gas, propane — or renewable fuels.

To date, some automobile companies, such as Ford and Honda, have fuel cell concept cars but have yet to release a vehicle to the public. Energy Department laboratories are working through cost and size issues, hoping to increase durability and reliability in extreme conditions, and improve processing systems that convert fuels into hydrogen for the fuel cell.

### Hydrogen

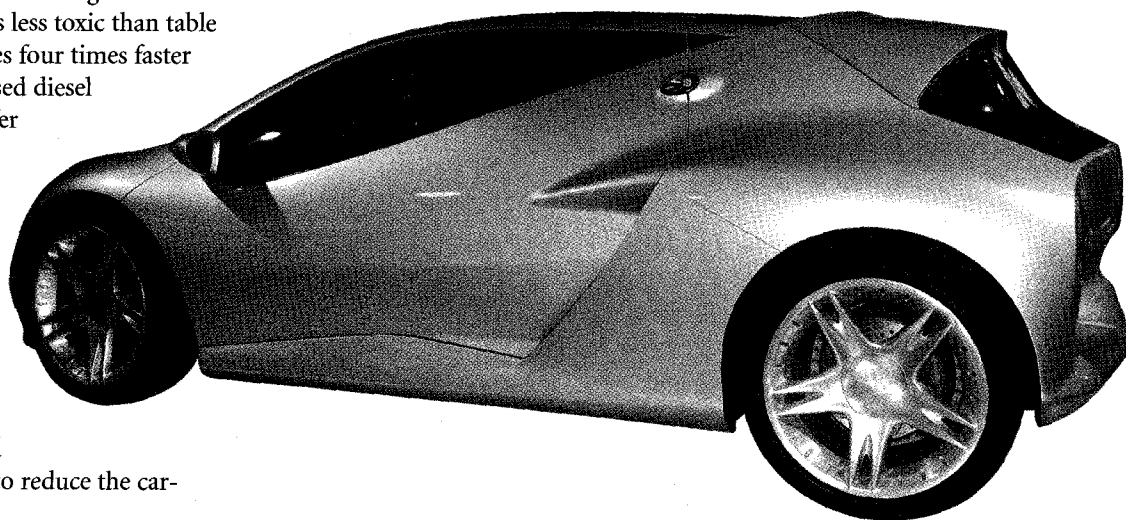
But in the coming years, there may be access to technologies that burn no petroleum.

Hydrogen is a sustainable, non-polluting alternative to gasoline, according to the Energy Department. Numerous methods exist for turning water into hydrogen energy.

Mainstreaming these methods, however, is costly and has become the biggest impediment in converting hydrogen into fuel. For example, many hydrogen production methods require electricity. Among others, GE has noted that this makes hydrogen's overall production costs considerably more expensive than other alternative fuels.<sup>13</sup>

However, the cost of hydrogen has not deterred its use: the U.S. space shuttle program, for example, relies on hydrogen to operate shuttle electrical systems.<sup>14</sup> And, with development subsidies from the Fuel Partnership, Ford has

*continued*



introduced a hydrogen combustion engine concept car.

It is primarily the absence of wide-spread infrastructure that has curbed hydrogen's practical use. Additionally, there is concern regarding hydrogen's low-concentration flammability: leaks in transport could present a public safety hazard. While this potential hazard does not preclude transporting and storing hydrogen, it does highlight some of the practical considerations that developers must address in the near future.

### Fuel from Coal?

The coal in Illinois alone has more energy potential than all the oil in Saudi Arabia,<sup>15</sup> and with government interest in domestic oil, the coal-to-liquid (CTL) process could be at the vanguard of a significant new industry.

But turning coal into fuel for cars faces challenges. One is finding ways to extract coal from the earth in a cleaner, more environmentally-friendly manner. CTL is generally produced by indirect liquefaction, a process that involves gasifying coal and making synthetic fuels from this gas. Using modern technology, indirect liquefaction produces zero-sulfur liquid fuels that do, in fact, conform to today's emission laws and regulations.<sup>16</sup> This potential success has attracted both entrepreneurs and government officials. Rentech Incorporated, for example, will take the plunge and revive a technology that exploits our cheap, abundant coal and converts it to truck fuel that it can sell at a premium.

But there is a second important catch. CTL production generates far more carbon dioxide than any other process, and many industries have no incentive to capture carbon dioxide beyond the limited amount they can sell for industrial use. For this reason, many environment and energy experts doubt that the method is compatible with a world increasingly concerned with the effects of global warming.<sup>17</sup>

Because of the rich coal deposits in the U.S. and the huge potential energy resource they represent, interest and investment is still high in developing coal as an alternative fuel for automobiles.

Persuading consumers to embrace alternative fuels is another challenge. Although alternative fuels are eco-friendly, consumers feel that the vehicles using them cost too much and that the fuels are not widely available.

### The Politics of Technology

What will affect adoption of alternative fuels and energy technologies?

#### Higher Oil Prices –

Environmentalists and many others in favor of alternative energy strategies believe high oil prices are spurring a change from black gold to “green” gold. This excitement is understandable, but may be somewhat premature. Clean fuels are not the only alternative fuels being produced. The availability of cheaper, but environmentally harmful energy sources may take advantage of this new urgency in finding cost relief. Technologies like liquid coal and tar sands are benefiting from high oil prices.<sup>18</sup> *The Economist* reported in 2005 that as producers realize the sheer volume of energy that can be extracted from coal, the previously too-complex process of turning coal to liquid may become a serious rival to oil, regardless of the environmental consequences.

#### Consumer and Producer Reticence –

Persuading consumers to embrace alternative fuels is another challenge. Although alternative fuels are eco-friendly, consumers feel that the vehicles using them cost too much and that the fuels are not widely available. More models, makes and conveniently-located fuel stations will be needed to assure the consumer that a decision to purchase an alternative-fuel friendly vehicle is wise.

Regarding biofuels, consumers and

producers alike question how much biomass there actually is or can be made available in the future, and whether farmers will be prepared to turn over their land to new uses. What's more, producers do not have the assurance of a “crystal ball” to predict the future. Energy companies, especially those lacking government subsidies, risk losing alternative fuel price competitiveness if crude oil prices drop below sixty dollars a barrel.

**Regulatory Forces** – By 2008, 10% of newly manufactured cars must meet California's “zero emissions” law or risk heavy penalties, or even exclusion from what is the world's fifth-largest economy. Even in light of all the barriers, researchers predict that due to this requirement alone, alternative, renewable-source fuels will replace about 15 percent of crude oil use within just 15 years, regardless of oil prices.<sup>19</sup>

Of that portion, half will likely be designer fuels like hydrogen, 20 percent will be biodiesel, 20 percent ethanol, and the remaining 10 percent split equally between natural gas and other blends.<sup>20</sup>

*This special advertising section is excerpted from a report on energy technology innovation produced by The Hanover Research Council, a leading independent research firm. No reporting or editing by the editorial staff of The New Republic was involved in producing this special section.*

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fossil.energy.gov/programs/oilgas/environment/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> “Fact Sheet: Just the Basics: Liquefied Petroleum Gas,” U.S. Department of Energy, August 2003.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ford.com.au/landing/egas/>

<sup>4</sup> “Fact Sheet: Liquefied Petroleum Gas,” Northeast Sustainable Energy Association.

<sup>5</sup> “Fact Sheet: Just the Basics: Natural Gas,” U.S. Department of Energy, August 2003.

<sup>6</sup> “Ford Cuts Natural Gas Vehicles,” *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 13 August 2004.

<sup>7</sup> “Fact Sheet: Just the Basics: Ethanol,” U.S. Department of Energy, August 2003.

<sup>8</sup> “Fact Sheet: Just the Basics: Biodiesel,” U.S. Department of Energy, August 2003.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> “Chevron Pursues Opportunities in Emerging Biofuels Sector,” Press Release: Chevron Corporation, 31 May 2006.

<sup>12</sup> “Fact Sheet: Just the Basics: Fuel Cells,” U.S. Department of Energy, August 2003.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.ge.com/research/>

<sup>14</sup> “Fact Sheet: Just the Basics: Hydrogen,” U.S. Department of Energy, August 2003.

<sup>15</sup> “Search for New Oil Leads to Processed Coal,” *The New York Times*, 5 July 2006.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> “Turning Coal to Fuel is Costly to Environment,” Worldwatch Institute, 12 July 2006.

<sup>18</sup> “Another false dawn,” *The Economist*, 3 November 2005.

<sup>19</sup> “Advocates laud biofuel as carbon neutral,” *Automotive News*, 10 July 2006.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

Trade Organization. But like early-twentieth-century Germany and Japan—two states that also had embraced liberalism and begun to turn back toward authoritarian rule—today's autocrats have decided that the state must take control of vital resources like oil and gas, locking them up rather than leaving them to the market.

Putin's plans to develop oil as a state weapon have long been clear. As director of the Federal Security Service (successor to the KGB) in St. Petersburg in the '90s, he authored an article arguing that the state should use natural resources to wield power. Since then, Putin has surrounded himself with former colleagues from St. Petersburg who share his views. In 2004, Putin and friends dismantled oil giant Yukos, a private company, and sold many of its assets to Rosneft, a state company. They boosted the power of state gas firm Gazprom; as Putin bluntly announced, "Gazprom is a powerful political and economic lever of influence over the rest of the world." This week—in a move widely interpreted as an attempt to assert more control over its resources—Russia revoked an environmental permit for a Royal Dutch Shell oil and gas project off the country's Pacific coast. Russians likely approved: A recent poll revealed strong Russian popular support for energy nationalization.

Other autocrats have followed a similar path. In Venezuela, Hugo Chávez took over the formerly independent Petróleos de Venezuela. Chávez ally Evo Morales has sent the army into Bolivian gas fields and nationalized Bolivia's industry. Ecuador's government has assumed control of U.S. oil company Occidental's holdings. And, in Iran, Ahmadinejad has tightened state control over the oil industry, promising to favor domestic investors and placing close allies—and former Revolutionary Guards—in key positions.

Today, these state oil companies sit atop unrivaled fortunes—a trend that, until recently, few policymakers seemed to notice. As *The Wall Street Journal* recently reported, "Ninety percent of the world's untapped conventional oil reserves are in the hands of governments or state-owned oil companies, far more than was the case several decades ago." Last year, Iran earned \$45 billion in oil profits, the biggest take-home since 1974. Russia's gross domestic product has grown from some \$200 billion in 1999 to nearly \$1 trillion today. Venezuela has posted some of the highest economic growth rates in the world—over 9 percent in 2005.

So autocratic nations, with China increasingly as their main consumer, now have a potent weapon to wield against the West for the first time since the fall of the Soviet Union. Sure, North Korea has missiles and, probably, nuclear weapons; but it is unclear if its missiles can even reach Alaska. Al Qaeda can manage vicious attacks all over the world; but it cannot truly harm developed economies, as the rebound from September 11 and the London bombings showed. China, by itself, could eventually become a true military powerhouse; but, currently, its military is at least 20 years from posing such a threat. Working together, however, this axis of autocrats can hamstring the world economy and, by exten-

sion, the United States and its democratic allies. And they have set about doing exactly that.

OVER THE PAST five years—as American policy-makers focused on the war on terrorism—these countries have begun to feel one another out. At first, many autocratic leaders were drawn to China, the major oil consumer. The Saudi royal family's anger with America's war on Islamic radicalism pushed Riyadh toward Beijing. King Abdullah became the first Saudi ruler to visit the Chinese capital, and the Saudis recently allowed Hu Jintao to address the shura council, the royal circle, a privilege Bush has never been granted. Other Arab oil producers, from Algeria to Syria, also started reaching out to China. Venezuela and China have made similar moves, as Chávez pushed for a closer partnership and China has supported Venezuela's bid for a U.N. Security Council seat.

Some of these embraces, to be fair, may be only short-term marriages of convenience. For instance, Russia fears that closer ties with China will lead to an influx of cheap Chinese goods, while Chinese officials worry about the instability of Chávez and Ahmadinejad. Moreover, for China, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela, trade with the United States still dwarfs trade with fellow autocrats; and the United States remains, for now, the biggest consumer in the world oil market.

Still, in the last two years, the axis has begun to solidify. The autocrats are building more lasting relationships, and, while many first developed ties to China, they are now crafting bilateral ties to one another as well. For example, Venezuela has begun cultivating a close diplomatic and commercial relationship with Iran, which has pledged to invest \$9 billion in Venezuela in return. The autocrats are also collaborating to control natural resources. According to the *Financial Times*, Chávez enlisted Iranian advisers to help him figure out how to ship more oil to China. Learning from his Venezuelan mentor, Morales of Bolivia took one of his first state trips to Beijing, where he invited China to access his state's resources. Meanwhile, Moscow recently inked a new deal to provide China with billions of dollars in gas, even as it refused to negotiate gas deals with many Western nations. And Tehran's mullahs have persuaded Beijing to develop a \$100 billion oilfield in Iran. Already, Iran supplies some 14 percent of China's oil.

Now, with a vast new market in China, the petroleum producers can consider reducing deliveries to the West, a far greater weapon today than during the 1970s oil embargo, when oil producers did not have an alternative consumer. Chávez has threatened to cut off all oil shipments to the United States and recently cut off supplies to some Citgo gas stations here. (Venezuela owns Citgo.) As energy scholars Gal Luft and Anne Korin note, Saudi officials also have begun speaking openly about cutting off oil to the United States—presumably if America's image in the Muslim world declines so much that Riyadh cannot afford an alliance with Washington. Russia has gone further, using its

resources to punish enemies that lean toward the West. This winter, state-controlled Gazprom temporarily cut off gas supplies to pro-Western Ukraine. Russia also cut off gas supplies to Moldova, and explosions in Russian pipelines to Georgia shut down gas deliveries to that nation, a close U.S. friend. (Though Moscow blamed the explosions on sabotage, the Georgian president claimed it was a deliberate Russian ploy.) With these moves, Moscow reminded Europe how dependent it is on Russia, which will supply nearly two-thirds of the continent's gas in the future.

Of course, reorienting oil infrastructure to export to China takes time—at least five to ten years, according to most petroleum experts. But, if that happens, the results could be disastrous for the United States. A disturbing recent study by the Government Accountability Office provided a sign of the dangers to the U.S. economy. The study examined the impact of a potential Venezuelan oil embargo on exports to the United States. It found that an embargo could add \$11 to the global price of a barrel of oil and shave up to \$23 billion off America's gross domestic product. It also admitted that the U.S. government has few options to handle a long-term shut-off of Venezuelan oil. And Venezuela is only the world's eighth-largest exporter of crude—a minnow in the global gas and oil market compared with Russia or Iran.

To make matters worse, the axis has also worked to prevent the construction of pipelines that the United States covets. Putin seems to have convinced Kazakh leaders not to back any transport routes that avoid Russia. He has pushed for a gas pipeline under the Baltic Sea that bypasses Ukraine and Poland—two democracies that have poor relations with Moscow. Beijing, meanwhile, has sought to convince Central Asian nations to ship their oil and gas through new pipelines heading east to China.

Moving beyond initial trade and diplomatic ties, the autocrats have built military relationships, too. Russia and China held their largest joint military exercises last year, showing how two armed forces that once detested each other have put aside past mistrust. Russia has become China's biggest arms supplier, and Moscow also has made winning back its military influence in Central Asia a priority, regaining basing rights in countries like Tajikistan. For his part, Chávez has reportedly offered to sell Tehran F-16 fighters, while Russia has provided the mullahs with civilian nuclear technology. In addition, China, Russia, and other Central Asian nations are considering turning the SCO into a full-fledged alliance, which would make it one of Asia's premier security groups. SCO is the "most dangerous organization that Americans have never heard of," argues Christopher Brown, a Central Asia expert. Or, as David Wall of Cambridge's East Asia Institute told *The Washington Times*, if the Shanghai group added Iran, "it would essentially be an OPEC with bombs."

For the United States and its allies, the consequences of these military relationships are ominous. Protected by their new arrangements with Russian forces, Central Asian nations can think twice about allowing the United States to

use their valuable bases. Uzbekistan has already evicted U.S. troops, while Kyrgyzstan has demanded vast increases in the rent paid by the Pentagon for bases. Venezuela's growing military strength has apparently allowed it to menace neighboring Colombia, a crucial U.S. ally, by providing support to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, a terrorist group that has hijacked planes, murdered American missionaries, and assassinated Colombian ministers.

In July, Israel felt the effects of these growing military links firsthand. Steaming back to Haifa, an Israeli ship was blasted apart by a Hezbollah missile. When rescue crews reached the boat, they found a floating, flaming wreck—and two dead sailors. Even the sophisticated Israeli military appeared taken by surprise. The missile was powerful and accurate, a far cry from Hezbollah's normally scattershot katyusha rockets. When IDF commanders learned more about the weapon, though, they might not have been so shocked: It was an Iranian radar-guided C-802 cruise missile, a version of the Silkworm, an anti-ship missile sold to Tehran by Beijing.

IRAN'S DEFIANCE OF the international community over its nuclear program has provided the best early test of the alliance's intentions. After Ahmadinejad became president in August 2005, he promised an "irreversible" path toward nuclear enrichment. Europe and the United States stepped up efforts to make Iran suspend its enrichment program, building a dossier of Iran's clandestine nuclear efforts to present at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In February, the IAEA found Iran noncompliant and voted to report Tehran to the U.N. Security Council. Russia and China won Iran more time at Turtle Bay, then refused to join U.N. statements calling for sanctions. This summer, the United States and Europe offered Iran another chance, suggesting new economic incentives if Iran halts its nuclear activities. Tehran responded slyly, with a government spokesman telling reporters that the incentives were just a starting point for negotiations. He could afford to be sly. Less than a week after Russia suggested, in July, it might be open to future sanctions against Iran, Putin backpedaled, announcing, "To talk of sanctions is premature."

These machinations provide a window into the future. On Iran, North Korea, and many other issues, the U.N. Security Council now faces a long-term divide among its five permanent members. Russia and China increasingly may vote together to block U.S., British, and French action against oil and gas producers (like Sudan and Burma), or simply to stop action against fellow authoritarian states (like Belarus and North Korea) even if those countries do not possess petroleum.

What's more, in this coming era of resource nationalism, democratization and human rights could well go out the window. Russia, China, Iran, and other autocracies are not only forestalling democracy at home but increasingly pre-

venting democracy abroad, whether by helping prop up the Uzbek regime, refusing to support tough action against the Burmese junta, or backing anti-democratic leaders in nations like Belarus and Armenia.

Moreover, to combat this axis, the Bush administration has had to reach out to some odious leaders, badly compromising its stated commitment to democratization. After delivering a speech earlier this year in which he—rightly—blasted Putin for destroying democracy, Dick Cheney jetted off to Kazakhstan, a country whose oil production could triple by 2015 and where the United States wants to build a pipeline that would bypass Russia. Soon after, the administration made plans to have Kazakh leader Nursultan Nazarbayev visit the White House and the Bush family compound in Maine, though the State Department calls Nazarbayev's human rights record "poor." (The Kazakh government made substantial oil and gas promises to China and Russia anyway.) Shortly before Cheney's visit to the Kazakh steppes, Bush hosted another autocrat, Ilham Aliyev, president of Azerbaijan. Aliyev, who inherited the job from his father, had been refused a formal Washington visit for two years after allegedly rigging the 2003 presidential election. But, recently, Aliyev was welcomed to the United States with open arms; Azerbaijan is, like Kazakhstan, crucial to pipelines skirting Russia. Then there is Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, the brutal longtime dictator of Equatorial Guinea, which can claim the third-highest oil exports in sub-Saharan Africa. Earlier this year, Obiang was treated to a private Washington audience with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who lavished praise on Equatorial Guinea's big man. "You are a good friend," Rice gushed.

**T**HE WHITE HOUSE does not seem to have a coherent strategy for handling the axis of oil and autocracy. Such a strategy would require several parts. First, the United States needs to use public diplomacy to undermine the legitimacy of autocratic regimes. Cheney, at least, seemed to grasp this when he denounced Russia's growing authoritarianism. But such rhetoric cannot be accompanied by a shift away from democratization in other parts of the world, such as Kazakhstan or even Equatorial Guinea. For now, backing leaders like Obiang may deliver oil to the United States, but America's long-term interests rely on its ability to woo foreign publics. To do so, U.S. values must be consistent. As studies by Julia Sweig of the Council on Foreign Relations show, when average people around the world perceive the United States as helping them achieve a free, rights-oriented system, America's appeal soars.

Yet, while taking a consistently hard line with autocratic regimes, the United States and other major oil consumers must make one strategic exception to this rule: They must engage with China in a bid to split it off from its oil-producing allies. Though a dictatorship, China is not an unreasonable, unmovable regime, and it clearly fears being at the mercy of unstable governments like Venezuela

in the future. Bush or his successor should push China to create a kind of "consumers' cartel" that would cooperate to pressure big producers like Saudi Arabia into reducing oil prices.

Perhaps most importantly, the administration needs to have a coherent plan for achieving energy independence. Despite Bush's declaration that the United States is "addicted to oil," Republicans last year offered oil and other fuel companies some \$11 billion in tax breaks—funds that will only encourage them to drill more rather than focus on alternative energies. Worse, the White House has refused to force U.S. car-makers to produce more efficient cars.

**I**F THE UNITED STATES and other major democracies do not implement some version of this strategy, things could get much worse. As nations hold tighter to their oil and gas, they will also think more about how they can defend these crucial assets. According to China scholars David Zweig and Bi Jianhai, Beijing has started to consider a new naval strategy in which it would try to control sea lanes, construct a blue-water navy, and build chains of military bases around Asia. In April, two leading Chinese academics suggested, in a much-noted article, that Beijing now might fight a war to secure its energy.

Other militaries already have begun to respond. In April, the United States created its first war game that fought an alliance of China, Iran, and Venezuela. Beijing and Tokyo both want to exploit the oil and gas resources in the East China Sea, which has already led to near-clashes. After Japan began drilling for gas in disputed waters last year, Chinese state media warned that conflict was "inevitable." Five Chinese warships, some armed with missiles, then appeared at a Chinese drilling platform in the sea near where Japan had staked its claim. According to Japan, the Chinese ships targeted a Japanese reconnaissance aircraft hovering overhead before choosing not to shoot it down. Tokyo did not back off; it fortified its claims in the sea and threatened military force against future Chinese actions. This "could lead to the kind of vicious cycle that descends into military conflict," leading Japanese politician Keizo Takemi warned in *The Economist*.

Sound familiar? In the 1930s and early '40s, the last age of resource nationalism, Japan had turned its back on previous liberal reforms and moved toward fascism. Its powerful economy was short on oil, gas, rubber, and other commodities. Insecure about British and U.S. alliances in Asia, Tokyo justified its invasions of the Dutch East Indies and other parts of Asia by claiming the West was preventing it from accessing supposedly free markets for resources. Japan also inked a loose alliance with Germany—which itself invaded Russia partly to gain Soviet oil—that ultimately became much more substantial. By August 1941, the United States had declared an oil embargo on Japan, heightening the tension over resources. In October 1941, Japan's leaders decided on total war if the embargo was not removed within a month. You know the rest. ■

# BOOKS & THE ARTS

## STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS Parting of Ways

**T**HE BEAT MOVEMENT IN LITERATURE is said to have begun in 1952 with Jack Kerouac and John Clellon Holmes. No such specific date that I know is cited for the movement's spread to films. (Underground film is something else.) The first Beat picture that I can remember didn't come until almost forty years later, with Richard Linklater's *Slacker* in 1991. Since then there has been a fairly steady stream.

I'd dub them Listless Films, even though that term is easy to misunderstand. The people in these films, mostly in their twenties, are not dull or lazy. Some of them even have jobs. But they are unexcited. They thrill not. The chief aim of the Listless Film is to present characters, usually intelligent, who have no kind of dynamism. Dynamism is the enemy. They reject the world that they find themselves spilled into at an age when they are supposed to join that world. They are like products of a national university who decline their diplomas.

The reasons for their attitudes have now been so thoroughly discussed that a Listless Film doesn't even bother to explain them. It assumes that we understand, and if at this late date we don't understand, then the film is simply not for us. But a distinguishing quality among these films is that—gently hermetic though they may seem at first—the best of them, like Linklater's, touch us. Some of them, like the recent *Mutual Appreciation* by Andrew Bujalski, remain self-enclosed: they seem made only for audiences of people like the ones on screen. But a good Listless Film carries a double melancholy for all: it makes us sad for its characters and sad for the world that has thus affected them.

**OLD JOY** is such a film, though it needs a bit of patience. For a consider-

able time—perhaps its first third—we respond to its floating tempo, its abhorrence of plot, its mere traversal of hours and days, as if it were going to be only one more acceptable member of the Listless school. Then the form becomes clearer, and—curiously—when we can foresee the shape of the piece, it becomes deeper. The very form of the film enlists *Old Joy* in the double melancholy group.

**OLD JOY**  
(Kino International)

The place is Oregon, beginning in Portland. Mark is married, and his wife is pregnant. He has an old friend, Kurt, who is unmarried and uncommitted in every avenue of possible commitment. Kurt floats from job to job, place to place, collective to collective. He persuades Mark to come away with him for a couple of days before settling into fatherhood. Kurt knows of a hot springs retreat up in the Cascade Mountains, and there they head.

They travel in Mark's slick new station wagon, whose radio, down in Portland, blasted one of those phone-in talk shows in which strident people vent opinions on political subjects. Such talk fades away. The sound track through much of the mountain trip provides quasi-abstract picking on a guitar. Soon the main connections with the world below are Mark's cell-phone calls to his wife, to report and to find out how she is. (The wife is implicitly a kind of impediment to freedom, which is notable since the director, Kelly Reichardt, is a woman.) The only persistent strain of domesticity through the film is Mark's dog, which accompanies him and Kurt—a lovely golden retriever that connotes firesides and all the rest of it.

The two men spend their first night on some abandoned furniture in a campsite. They sit around a fire and do some target shooting with an air pistol they find there, while Kurt divests himself of such

ashram wisdom as his belief that the universe is tear-shaped, a tear dropping through space. The next day they spend at the hot springs, each man relaxing in his own tub, where again Kurt ruminates: "Sorrow is nothing but worn-out joy."

So this is the story of a two-day excursion for two old friends before they split, possibly forever. One view of the story can be that Mark is quaffing his last draught of freedom before he settles into bourgeois life, without regret but with knowledge of what he is leaving. Another view is that Kurt is full of bravado: he means what he says about the way he lives, but he knows what he is missing. Anyway, each of them knows that there is a serious price to be paid for the way the other one lives.

When they get back to Portland, Mark drops Kurt in front of the apartment house where he is now crashing. There is no scene of parting: in a long shot they simply part. When Mark drives off, the strident political spiel resumes on his car radio. We follow Kurt as he idles through bits of his lifestyle—waiting patiently for a date who doesn't show up, gazing curiously into the window of a Chinese herbal shop, slipping some change to a panhandler—just lolling in his universe. And now we sense that the film has been one tick in history's clock.

One aspect of Reichardt's directing is nervy: she shoots a great deal of landscape through the window of the moving car. (I've read that this is a characteristic of her two previous features, unseen by me.) Ultimately she smoothes us into acceptance of her purpose in these moving shots: life as transition, as temporary glimpses, a world around us that teases simply because we must move through it.

Another matter enters the viewer's mind: homoeroticism. It is virtually impossible to see a film nowadays about two men going off together, especially into the woods, without a glimmer of suspicion about sex. This glimmer is heightened because, at the hot springs, nude Kurt massages nude Mark's shoulders as his friend lies in his tub. There is not the slightest overt sexual move, but for enlightened us nowadays, the thought of some basic attraction lurks. After such Freudian knowledge, what forgiveness?

Daniel London is Mark and gives him a credible schizoid being: his response to these two days that are essentially the way he used to live and also his tacit linkage to his new life. Will Oldham plays Kurt like a man who has survived an existence that was supposed to have nullified him and who has some quiet pride in it. The film's title, too, is duplex: joy in Mark's last taste of an old life; Kurt's joy that he is still in it.

Peter Sillen shot the film in Super 16,

presumably for reasons of flexibility and intimacy, but the image definition is high and the colors speak. Reichardt wrote the screenplay with Jonathan Raymond (based on a short story of his), and they have made it painlessly symbolic of two worlds. Reichardt also edited the picture capably. About her directing, after praising her simplicity, one has to praise her daring. To make this film took considerable conviction—and, for an artist, conviction usually entails courage. ■

## James Wolcott Meow Mix

Mommies, mommies, mommies.

I.  
**W**ATCHING THE MOMmy Wars makes me mighty glad I'm not a Daddy. To be sure, there's a lyrical part of me that longs to savor the joys of fatherhood; to jam a stroller into the trunk of a taxi in the pounding rain, to trade nanny horror stories with the other fellas in the support group, to lie awake at night worried sick over tuition fees and dental bills, and, most of all, to deck myself out in the official uniform of the Middle-Aged Dad: baseball cap, team jacket, hip-pouch cellphone holster, and thick-soled white sneakers suitable for a lunar landing. I often spot such dedicated MADs wheeling their sticky offspring along the sidewalks of upper Manhattan, bracing themselves as they bend over to pick up the juice cup that Jeremy has dropped for the five-thousandth time. Yes, that could be me stooping and retrieving. Married and childless, I'm missing out on so much. Yet I'm willing to forgo the mature satisfactions of being a father, and how, because it has spared me having to listen to the incessant kvetching and crabbing of the Mommy Wars—the latest endless installment of “I Can't Believe How She Lets Those Kids Run Wild.”

Since I am not personally invested in either side of the guerrilla struggle, I can listen to complaints from both camps and make thoughtful “ums” without having to commit myself. It makes life so much easi-

### MOMMY WARS:

STAY-AT-HOME AND CAREER MOMS FACE OFF ON THEIR CHOICES, THEIR LIVES, THEIR FAMILIES

Edited by Leslie Morgan Steiner  
(Random House, 336 pp., \$24.95)

TO HELL WITH ALL THAT:  
LOVING AND LOATHING  
OUR INNER HOUSEWIFE

By Caitlin Flanagan  
(Little, Brown, 244 pp., \$22.95)

### GET TO WORK:

A MANIFESTO FOR  
WOMEN OF THE WORLD  
By Linda R. Hirshman  
(Viking, 101 pp., \$19.95)

er, especially since the Mommy Wars have undergone major escalation this year with the publication of *Mommy Wars*, *To Hell With All That*, and *Get to Work*. If James Thurber were alive to update “The War Between Men and Women,” the hapless men (I picture them as hairless blobs) would be relegated to the sidelines as fierce tribes of Working Moms and Stay-at-Homes go at it on the soccer field, tufts of grass and tufts of hair flying from tornado clouds of swirling limbs.

Armed with virtuous pride and bionic eyes that can spot every moral defect and child-rearing error across a crowded playground, the Working Mother and the Stay-at-Home Mother are convinced

that the other is shortchanging herself and the future of her children—letting down the team, not to mention the nation. The Working Mother believes that her counterpart has sentenced herself to house arrest for the sake of the kids in their formative years, subjecting herself to a bovine existence that fences her off from the striving world and lowers her metabolism, her butt broadening to fit the contours of her “mom jeans.” The Stay-at-Home Mom is fooling herself if she believes her darlings will someday appreciate her sacrifice on their behalf: kids never do, they take this sacrifice for granted and may grow up spoiled, over-protected, clingy, and nose-dribbly. Conversely, the Stay-at-Home Mom patronizes and pities the Working Mother for being MIA during those precious, unrecoverable wonder years, abandoning the little ones to the vagaries of nannies, day care, or relatives willing to babysit (or roped into it).

This mutual pact of pity and condescension is crosscut with envy. The Working Mother may envy the Stay-at-Home Mother for not having to work, for being fortunate enough to have married a major earner who foots the bills while she has to put up with a dreary commute to a job that cuts her off from her children. Such a mother labors not because she prefers to, but because she has to—she doesn't have the cushy option of sitting around watching *Dr. Phil* or hosting afternoon playdates. Meanwhile, the Stay-at-Home Mom may envy the Working Mom for her freedom and mobility to associate with fellow adults instead of being stuck indoors staring at the crayon artwork posted on the refrigerator door and listening to infantile prattle until she is about to go out of her mind. It is grown-up prattle that she craves! (A British journalist named Helen Kirwan-Taylor caused a ruckus when she confessed in an article in London's *Daily Mail* that her children and their activities were tedious beyond compare: “While all my girlfriends were dropping important careers and occupying their afternoons with cake baking, I was begging the nanny to stay on, at least until she had read my two a bedtime story. What kind of mother hates reading bedtime stories? A bad mother, that's who, and a mother who is bored rigid by her children.”)

Whatever choice a woman makes,

James Wolcott is a contributing writer to VANITY FAIR.

or has foisted upon her by necessity and circumstance, ambivalence digs in its spikes. Women—to generalize madly—internalize a far thornier thicket of conflicts and tensions than most men do. Their worries, duties, doubts, regrets, and unfulfilled yearnings can jab at them from different directions at varying intensities, their unresolved feelings never quite coming to rest, whereas men tend to load all their grief, worry, and regret into one large duffel bag that weighs them down like Willy Loman's suitcase, bearing their woe with slumped shoulders and weary sighs—making a stoic show of pretending to accept their fate, while trying to weasel out of it. Men are competitive with other men, but less comparison-oriented. When men take inventory of their lives, we are the only ones standing on the scale; we don't weigh ourselves against a brother-in-law or against Murray down the street. We tend to practice a laissez-faire policy toward other men and their (mis)deeds, an indifference born out of a deeper apathy. That's what mystifies so many married men about the Mommy Wars. We don't understand why so many women are so averse to sit in moral judgment of other women's difficult choices, why they care so much about what other women do (often women they barely know), and why so many of those women are writers.

CONSIDER *MOMMY WARS*, EDITED by Leslie Morgan Steiner, an executive at *The Washington Post*—an anthology of first-person pieces by female combatants who represent a roulette spin of the editor's Rolodex. Its contributors include newspaper and magazine editors, freelancers, columnists, novelists (Jane Smiley, Susan Cheever), a television producer, and a journalism professor, with nary a scientist, stock trader, clerk, cashier, medical practitioner, Pilates instructor, dolphin trainer, insurance broker, or politician peeping to be heard. It is understandable that in assembling an anthology of original essays, an editor is more apt to tap those who use words for a living and let the other occupations fend for themselves. But this makes it incumbent on those who use words for a living to deliver at the plate. As battlefield dispatches, the essays here are mostly humdrum—undistinguished and often indistinguishable. Those hoping for juicy tales from the metropark jungles will find themselves nibbling on parsley.

The points of view and the personal histories in the book are not uniform, yet the voices blend into a vanilla fudge of chatty banality and flat assertion. Gone are the days when Norman Mailer could compliment feminist authors for writing like "tough faggots" with the electrical-cord lash of their fuck-you prose. The mommy warriors here abound in compassion and solicitude, an empathy and self-empathy that packs their prose in cotton balls. Testimonial after testimonial recounts episodes of turbulence in the author's life before hang-gliding into a soft landing warmed by the sunset glow of wisdom and perspective.

Almost every chapter is a Lifetime movie in miniature, complete with a snugly epiphany before the fadeout. Anna Fels: "As we exchanged greetings and bits of news, I struggled to meld my old image of Julia with the face that was before me, and I could see her making the same complex adjustments as she scanned mine. We were the same but not the same. Getting to this moment, with our children nearly grown, had been hard for both of us, and our faces showed it. Promising to call each other, we tried awkwardly and unsuccessfully to embrace amid our bags and umbrellas. But it didn't matter. We were happy to see each other." Ann Misiasek Sarnoff: "I want to show them, particularly my daughter, that you can and should enjoy work (and be successful at it) as a woman and as a mom. I want my kids to know that I'm happy going to work. Because I am." Anne Marie Feld: "It's too soon to project how work will fit into the rest of my life. But I won't miss Pascale's life, or mine, in the race to get things done. This, I hope, will keep me sane. Better than sane. Happy." Dying for a sneaky Mary McCarthy uppercut, a caffeinated jolt of Fran Lebowitz, I held out hope for Leslie Lehr's "I Hate Everybody," its surly title winging like Cupid's arrow to my charcoaled heart. Imagine my letdown when Lehr lapsed into standard operating rock-a-bye mode ("When the girls fell asleep on our blanket beneath the umbrella, I watched their little chests rise and fall, as ceaseless as the tide") and betrayed the misanthropic promise of her title: "Most of all, I want my daughters to be happy. They know I don't really hate anybody. And they know that I love them most of all." This refrain of happy-happy-happy begins to sound like the jingle of an ice-cream truck moseying down the street.

Even the tears that are shed often seem like designer tears, dramatic ploys. Molly Jong-Fast, the daughter of novelist Erica Jong and proof that bad writing can run in the family, goes on a crying jag after the birth of her son.

I superciliously blundered into motherhood, sure I'd make my own organic baby food while writing the great American novel. But when Max was born I would just put him in his little bassinet and cry. A month postpartum I wasn't making baby food or writing or even taking care of my child. I was too busy crying and eating quarts of ice cream. . . .

Sometimes I would cry because I wasn't going to be able to protect him in this horrible world.

Sometimes I would cry because I was worried he was going to die.

Sometimes I would cry because it was January, it was snowing, and I had stopped taking my Effexor.

Sometimes I would cry because of the decline of Western civilization and the difficulty of finding Kobe beef.

Fortunately, her mother-in-law intervened, hiring Nurse Phyllis to care for Max as Jong-Fast went on salting her ice cream with tears and presumably pursuing her quest for Kobe beef. I do not intend to make light of postpartum depression. It's Jong-Fast's pampered naïveté and solipsism that boggle, as expressed in her wide-eyed belief that "having a baby would only make me more productive."

The rival factions in the Mommy Wars aren't always at saber points, according to contributor Veronica Chambers. The opposition parties are capable of "Kumbaya" moments of sodality, putting aside their differences to join forces and gang up on married and single women who haven't reproduced, those amateurs. Chambers has been hazed by the Mom Squad.

The one thing my stay-at-home and working-mom friends share in the country of motherhood is a superiority gene . . . that convinces them that women who don't have children are, despite their educations and accomplishments, dumb as doorknobs. I've sat through many a heated conversation about the merits of staying home with kids versus continuing to work, sports versus languages, sleep-away camp versus day camp, during which

I have been silly enough to offer an opinion only to be shut down more condescendingly and viciously by wise Goddess Mothers than I have ever been shut down by any man.

"What do *you* know?" Goddess Mother number one asks me. "You don't have children."

So butt out, Gidget.

## II.

**W**OMEN CAN'T WIN WHEN it comes to other women, which is why the key to success for writers enlisted in the Mommy Wars is having the commercial knack of appealing to male editors and readers, creating a breeze that lofts the byliner above the rest of the diaper brigade and makes them look petty and earnest—small-time. Enter Caitlin Flanagan, fresh from her milk bath. The Holly Golightly of the Mommy Wars, Flanagan belongs to no gaggle, no ideological ghetto, no school of flesh-eating fish. Literary journalism's leading MILF, she is a singular phenomenon, a sorority of one, pole-vaulting out of nowhere into the pages of *The Atlantic*, from the pages of *The Atlantic* into the pages of *The New Yorker*, and from the pages of *The New Yorker* into the lemon meringue of her first book, *To Hell With All That*.

Don't be fooled by the fed-up title. Flanagan isn't throwing in the monogrammed dish towel after years of slaving for ingrates. "To hell with all that" was her late mother's emancipation proclamation. One morning, after cooking breakfast for her husband and little Caitlin, Mom climbed up the stepladder to wash the Dutch-motif wallpaper and, sponge in hand, suddenly went into Ibsonite revolt against her state in life. She flung the sponge into the basin, said "To hell with it," climbed down the ladder, and headed straight for the want ads to hunt for a job.

"But to hell with *what* exactly?" Flanagan plangently asks. "This was the question that plagued me for many unhappy months after the stepladder resolution. In the first place, I realize now, to hell with the demoralizing nature of make-work cleaning projects. And to hell with wasting her education. Hadn't she sailed through nursing school on a sea of A's? ... But most important was this: to hell with her marriage—or at least with its most unpleasant aspect, my father's

cheapness and my mother's absolute lack of financial power."

Defying her husband's Ralph Kramden refusal to let any wife of his work, Flanagan's mother returned to nursing, leaving Caitlin to fend for herself after school, a latchkey kid before the phrase was fashionable. She puts up a passive-aggressive fight against this sense of abandonment. "On my first day as a latchkey child, I lost the key. A key was hidden under a stone for me, but I used it once and forgot to return it. It vanished immediately. Frustrated, my mother tied a third key on a piece of thick white string and hung it around my neck, a weighty reminder that I'd been dumped by Mom." Afternoons alone made the house seem haunted. "It did not help that I am a hysteric by nature. When Patty Hearst was kidnapped across town, I became convinced I was next."

Flanagan's plight didn't last forever. Her father's academic sabbatical took them overseas, forcing her mother to give up her latest job, and when they returned he struck literary gold with a successful historical novel, "a turn of events that energized and occupied them both." Although Flanagan's ragamuffin period was brief, it seems to have marked her as deeply as Dickens's traumatic stretch in the shoe-blackening factory. Three decades later, "my anxiety about being alone in a house borders on the pathological."

The "all that" that her mother said to hell with, Flanagan clutches like Linus's security blanket. Far from following her mother's feisty example, Flanagan has set up fortress in the family nest, fluffing her glossy feathers as the stay-at-home mother of two sons and the spokesmodel for semi-divine domesticity. Her ideas are retrofitted to the 1950s fantasy ideal of the perfect housewife in pearls and pressed apron, a roast in the oven and a martini ready for the breadwinner when his car pulls into the driveway. Flanagan recognizes that the past wasn't really that idyllic and pristine—indeed, that it is mostly fictitious. Asked by Stephen Colbert, the host of Comedy Central's *Colbert Report*, to pin down the actual dates of the Golden Age of American marriage, Flanagan replied, "This is the misty, hazy, never-really-happened time period that I'm trying to sell my book on, but let's just call it the fifties and sixties." It's easy to romanticize a *Brigadoon* past against which contemporary life will always run a shabby, disappointing second.

Numerous rooftop snipers have pointed out that it is also easy for Flanagan to romanticize the joys of traditional housewifery because she has done so damned little of the actual drudge work, her second husband's position as an executive at Mattel sparing her the indignity of serfdom. "I'm an at-home mother, far too educated and uppity to have knuckled down and learned anything about stain removal or knitting or stretching recipes," she writes with a mingling of conceit and mild self-criticism. Not only is Flanagan not cursed with dishpan hands, she has never pricked herself with a needle in the act of sewing. "I have been married a total of sixteen years to a total of two men, and never once have I been asked to iron a single item of either man's clothing or to replace even one popped button, for which I suppose I have the women's movement to thank. But I realize now, late in the game, that we'd be much better off if I had a few of those skills." The book is replete with similar negative testimonials and idle boastings, perhaps the most comprehensive being this:

I have never once argued with my husband about which of us was going to change the sheets of the marriage bed, but then, to my certain knowledge, neither one of us ever has changed the sheets. Or scrubbed the bathtubs, or dusted the cobwebs off the top of the living room bookcase, or used the special mop and the special noncorrosive cleanser on the hardwood floors. The maid has. Two years ago our little boys got the stomach flu, one right after the other, and there were so many loads of wash to do, but we did not do them. The nanny did.

And the nanny did more than that. She was a regular Florence Nightingale with the retch bucket.

"Paloma, Patrick is throwing up!" I would tell [the nanny], and she would literally run to his room, clean the sheets, change his pajamas, spread a clean towel on his pillow, feed him ice chips, sing to him. I would stand at the doorway, concerned, making funny faces at Patrick to cheer him up—the way my father did when I was sick and my mother was taking care of me.

I wanted Paloma to be my friend and equal, but I also wanted her to do what I told her. Most of the time she did.

Sounds like the tender bond between Karen and Rosario on *Will & Grace*, minus the bitchy banter (“Clean it up yourself, Count Drunkula!”)—or maybe I’m thinking of Scarlet and Prissy, minus the smacking around. To her credit, Flanagan wasn’t a cruel overseer; she labored to get Paloma enrolled in Social Security, and lobbied her friends to do likewise for their household servants. But the picture of her making pookie faces as the nanny does the swab work reeks of the cute prerogative that animates her persona, and her politics, such as they are. Flanagan wants you to know that she has it somewhat cushy, but she isn’t going to be defensive about it. Feminists peddling guilt will have to press another doorbell, because she isn’t buying.

**I**N FACT, SHE’S SELLING, AND THE brand that she is selling is Caitlin Flanagan, the one contented housewife on Wisteria Lane. Whether she is writing about nannies, clutter, or the wifely duty to keep the husband’s candle lit (“The rare woman—the good wife, and the happy one—is the woman who maintains her husband’s sexual interest and who returns it in full measure”), the true subject of Flanagan’s pieces is herself, and the status of her thought processes, subject to change. Like Naomi Wolf and Elizabeth Wurtzel, she is the self-dramatist of a life-in-progress, each new personal installment supposedly indicative of some larger, evolving social dynamic.

Unlike those two show ponies, Flanagan doesn’t have a woolly-bully brain given to run-on thoughts and run-on sentences. Her essays and mini-memoirs marry a classical structure to a conversational manner that endows them with a knowing, confidential edge. A shrewd trend-spotter and dissector, she maintains a tidy ship of prose without sounding like a stuck-up prune. Sometimes she gets too quippy, as in her otherwise astute analysis of the sour underwash of Allison Pearson’s best-selling novel *I Don’t Know How She Does It*: “When Kate and her husband reconnect in a London coffee shop after a brief, miserable separation, ‘we both laugh, and for a moment Starbucks is filled with the sound of Us.’ (Funny, I thought that grating, deafening sound was the coffee grinder.)” The same failing appears in her chapter on household clutter: “*The Zen of Organizing*, which is studded with the inspirational words of boffo organizers from

Plutarch to Martha Graham (although nothing at all from Joe Stalin, who by all accounts ran a very tight ship). . . .” But she is always a lively writer, she delivers good entertainment value on the page (a dying talent in magazine journalism), and she knows when to stop playing patty-cake and administer a judo chop (as when she disparages Christopher Byron’s hatchet job on Martha Stewart: “Byron’s notion that she had a hysterectomy as a form of birth control [is] a notion that only a man could believe and only a jerk could promulgate”).

Although Flanagan is fond of quoting Joan Didion at her gnostic worst (“If, as Joan Didion once wrote, ‘marriage is the classic betrayal,’ a wedding is the Judas kiss, public and terrible”), which only compounds the morbid pretension, her true affinity is for the largely forgotten household names who epitomized wry suburban common sense and wisecracking humor in the Art Linkletter Age of Innocence, when “‘student unrest’ was rarely mentioned, in which the central elements of the national consciousness weren’t up for complete reassessment and rejection, in which most of life’s difficulties could be handled with a combination of good humor and endurance, in which graver matters were quickly dispatched by scheduling an appointment with one’s ‘pastor or clergyman,’” and before *The Ice Storm* and *American Beauty* painted the Formica counters black with existential dolor and bitter regret. Rescued from prelapsarian obscurity are the novelist and playwright Jean Kerr (*Please Don’t Eat the Daisies*), the newspaper columnist Erma Bombeck (*I Lost Everything in the Post-Natal Depression* and *The Grass Is Always Greener Over the Septic Tank*, among others), and the cookbook author Peg Bracken (from whom Flanagan quotes the hilariously dour recipe for Skid Row Stroganoff: “Add the flour, salt, paprika, and mushrooms, stir, and let it cook five minutes while you light a cigarette and stare sullenly at the sink”). They are Flanagan’s honorary soul sisters—wives and mothers and self-made authors who knew how to grumble without dragging a sense of self-pity and victimhood across the patio. The sass and acuity of their writing give the lie to the feminist myth of middle-class suburbia as the manicured graveyard of the walking dead, Flanagan contends.

The success of the women’s movement depended on imposing a certain

narrative—of boredom, of oppression, of despairing uselessness—on an entire generation of women. This narrative has only gained strength as the years have passed, leaving people with a skewed and rather offensive view of those women. . . . To think about her life in any depth is to realize that even the most “typical” housewife of them all—Erma Bombeck—led a life of infinitely greater complexity, worth, and dignity than any of the modern mythologizers, with their subdued and shrinking heroines [she’s alluding to *The Hours* and *Far From Heaven*], could imagine.

Flanagan has a tendency to see the furry hand of feminism choking the fun and the natural spontaneity out of bourgeois life, but she seldom engages feminist authors directly and concretely, treating feminism as if it were an invisible, pervasive nerve agent with a punitive streak: “Because I have no desire to be burned in effigy by the National Organization for Women, I am impelled to say that. . . .” And so it’s little surprise where her sympathies lie in the Mommy Wars, as revealed by her satirical account of a kindergarten T-ball game where her son Conor is playing:

The working mothers arrived exactly on time, a precision team. They clicked to their seats and fished tiny video cameras out of enormous purses. It was as though a significant swath of the professional and financial life of Los Angeles had been temporarily frozen in midaction—meetings abandoned, e-mail messages piling up, cell phones set to vibrate—so that a group of highly paid senior executives could watch some five-year-olds play ball. Impervious to these tensions were the at-home mothers who had arrived early and reserved blocks of seats, and who were chatting expansively with one another. Many of them had toddlers in tow, and they passed down snacks and sippy cups of juice as they talked. Why shouldn’t they make a day of it? Having time to be fully present for their children is exactly why most of them don’t work.

Executive parents produce executive children, and although Flanagan counts herself among the at-home mothers, she too has executive chores, “efficiently

completing hot lunch order forms and day camp applications, ordering team T-shirts and birthday party presents by the dozen," her children's lives planned months in advance. But unlike the working mothers with their synchronized movements, she has the satisfaction of knowing that she is "fully present" in a way that they can never be in the corporate data stream. Will it make a critical difference for her two sons down the road? Flanagan's mind says no, no, but her heart says yes, yes, maybe. "No head start in life that will ensure them of some prize that will forever elude the children of working mothers. All they gained, really, was the sweetness of being with the person who loved them most in the world. All they gained was an immersion in the most powerful force on earth: mother love. And perhaps there is something in that alone."

**P**ERHAPS THERE IS, BUT MILLIONS of American mothers do not have the option of enveloping their children in a cotton-candy cloud of unconditional love until they are old enough to soldier off to school

with their little backpacks. And there are mothers who do have the option, but choose to remain in the pros not only because of the income and the social prestige, but because, like Flanagan, they have a vocation, a calling—a talent that will torment them if it goes unused. Flanagan is lucky: her vocation allows her to stay home and work on any flat surface where her computer can sit. If she were irresistibly drawn to medicine, law, education, or social work, she might decide that there are things more (or as) important than scuba-deep mother love. It's easy being a stay-at-home mother when you're already a stay-at-home writer. Being a writer makes agoraphobia redundant.

Flanagan isn't some catbird-seat ditz oblivious to sorrow and suffering. Her sportiness has its limits. The last chapter of the book is a piercing account of her battle with cancer and the realizations it drove home: "It took a long time [after her mother's death] to understand that I was no one's daughter anymore, and it took me just as long to really understand that I was a mother, not someone playing at homemaking." It's a pity she can-

not resist using her health crisis to buttress her thesis. "When I was too sick to get out of bed, which was often, my husband took the children to school and to playdates and birthday parties. And when I couldn't walk from the car to the doctor's office, he carried me. And if that's a traditional marriage, I'll take it." As if a New Age husband would have dumped his wife at the curb, or rolled her through the lobby in a shopping cart. Like so many cultural conservatives, Flanagan promotes the notion that those with traditional values are the only ones who reliably conduct themselves with honor and decency, while everybody else is busy sacking Rome.

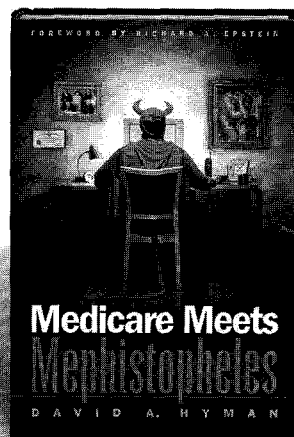
Then again, it is difficult to tell how deeply Flanagan believes this, or how intensely she believes anything. She often seems to be playing at being a provocateur, gunning for a fight, then hiding behind her humor and accusing everyone of overreacting. (From Laurie Abraham's astute profile of Flanagan in *Elle*: "When people charge that she's 'rolling back the feminist movement,' Flanagan says, she responds, 'I'm like, With these funny essays, in *The Atlantic*? I don't think so.'")

# New Books from the CATO INSTITUTE

Hyman shines light on Medicare's corrupt state and on the inequities and iniquities that its supporters are willing to tolerate in the name of government-run health care.

**"A slim volume that reveals some eternal—and perhaps infernal—truths about America's version of the welfare state."**

—PROFESSOR  
WILLIAM M. SAGE  
University of Texas Law School

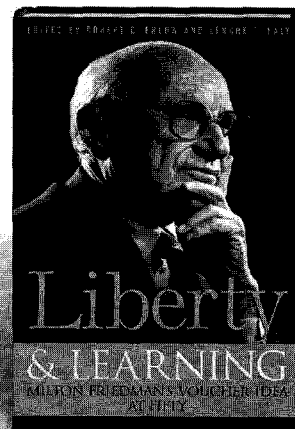


1-930865-90-2 • hardback • \$14.95  
1-930865-92-9 • paperback • \$9.95

50 years after Milton Friedman's groundbreaking essay launched the modern school choice movement, this volume reassesses its merit and relevance for the 21st Century.

**"Thanks to half a century of accumulated research, we can now assess who was right: the intellectual majority or the 'eccentric' champion of market education."**

—ANDREW COULSON  
Director of the Cato Institute's  
Center for Educational Freedom



1-930865-93-7 • hardback • \$19.95  
1-930865-96-4 • paperback • \$11.95

Available in bookstores nationwide, by calling 800-767-1241 or visiting [www.cato.org](http://www.cato.org)  
Cato Institute, 1000 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20001

Her heart really isn't in the heat of argument or the thick of debate.

For this reason, she removed her most controversial pronouncement ("When a mother works, something is lost") from the revised version of one of the essays in the book, and let her publisher neuter its original subtitle, telling Stephen Colbert that "the original subtitle was 'How Feminism Shortchanged a Generation,' but the publisher said that wouldn't sell, so we have a softer title..." It isn't in Flanagan's or her publisher's commercial interest to be pegged as an anti-feminist curmudgeon, in the moldy mold of Kate O'Beirne, author of *Women Who Make the World Worse*. There is more commercial upside and room to roam in being perceived as a funny-gal celebrity author in the cocktail-hour manner of Nora Ephron. Eventually she, too, may be writing about her neck.

But the erratic, embarrassing ass Flanagan made of herself on *The Colbert Report* indicates that she isn't comfortable with Ephronesque celebrity either, and that she is unfit to serve as an ambassador for the return of gracious living. Snobby and superior to those déclassé couples who need a "date night" to get their ya-yas out, she told Colbert, "The couple that is so starved for sexuality that the husband has to go to the Olive Garden and see a Meg Ryan movie once a week just so he gets a little nooky is a very modern invention. The old wife thought that was just part of the day, there was no Olive Garden, there was just the nooky." Nooky-on-demand is part of the wife's duty, like telling the maid where to dust.

To Flanagan, submissiveness and subservience are embedded in the natural order of postmodern caveman and cave-mate. Unlike her mother, Flanagan proposes a strategic retreat in which wives bow to their husbands' authority no matter how wayward the man of the house may be. Boiling Flanagan's sentiments down to their stark logical essence, Colbert said: "Better for women to be dependent on their husbands no matter what the situation is." After some hemming and hawing, Flanagan conceded that "you'll not find any refutation from me ... more or less, you're on target there." Colbert, bidding her and the segment adieu, crooned, "You are a perfect woman," to which Flanagan replied, "I've been told that." Whenever Flanagan ventures beyond the chalk lines of her own experience and vanity, condescension

creeps to the fore, because it is hard for her to sympathize with all those also-rans who haven't pulled themselves up by their own pantyhose and landed a quality man, as she has. It's not her fault so many women have let feminism fill their heads with sour grievances and false expectations. More fools they.

### III.

LINDA R. HIRSHMAN HAS NO patience for such pedicured revisionism and counterrevolutionary back-pedaling. After the victories women have won, why heed a counsel of retreat and defeat? Forward ho! A former visiting professor of philosophy and women's studies at Brandeis University, and the author of *Hard Bargains: The Politics of Sex and A Woman's Guide to Law School*, and number seventy-seven on Bernard Goldberg's list of "100 People Who Are Screwing Up America" (not to brag, but I outrank her at number sixty-four), Hirshman cracks the whip with the no-nonsense title and message of her new book, *Get to Work: A Manifesto for Women of the World*.

Let me confess a prejudice. I enjoy reading manifestos. I admire their drill-instructor militance and their visionary vigor. They are models of compressed energy—minus source notes, *Get to Work* squeaks in at under a hundred pages, and as prose they are pure protein. Manifestos always sound so certain of themselves, so urgent and declamatory and summoning to battle. After the subjectivity and the wan introspection of so much of *The Mommy Wars* and *To Hell With All That*, it is a pleasant jolt to read a book that is outer-directed (to use David Riesman's old phrase), scans deep downfield, and drives straight at the defensive line—a book that isn't out to make nice and smooth over disagreements.

For Hirshman, the feminist movement didn't fail because it was radical. "It [failed] because feminism was not radical enough. A movement that stands for everything ultimately stands for nothing." Where Betty Friedan is one of the trouble-brewing witches in *To Hell With All That*, shrieking at housewives for not recognizing how oppressed they were ("she told the women that they were living lives of quiet desperation; the suburbs were a concentration camp"), she is the guiding godmother behind *Get to Work*, its resurrected prophet. "For twenty-five years, [Friedan] watched as the backlash

generation slowly walked away from the promise of a better life. Women—whether they stay home, or, like most women, just carry the responsibility for home to work and back—are homeward bound. Their men won't carry enough of the household to enable them to succeed fully in the public world. Glass ceiling? The thickest glass ceiling is at home."

Embracing one's inner housewife and admiring one's reflection in the glass ceiling, as Flanagan would have women do, is straitjacketing one's potential and submitting to a kinder, gentler purdah:

Bounding home is not good for women and it's not good for the society. The women aren't using their capacities fully; their so-called free choice makes them unfree dependents on their husbands. Whether they leave the workplace altogether or just cut back their commitment, their talent and education are lost from the public world to the private world of laundry and kissing boo-boos. The abandonment of the public world by women at the top means the ruling class is overwhelmingly male. If the rulers are male, they will make mistakes that benefit males. Picture an all-male Supreme Court. We may well go back there. What will that mean for the women of America?

Despite her subtitle, Hirshman's manifesto is not aimed at the women of the world, but at the upper stratum of intelligent, educated, affluent women who cast aside their college degrees to kiss boo-boos and keep their rugrats entertained. "These educated and privileged women matter. They matter because they are the most likely women to become the rising stars of the new economy—the future senators, deal makers, newspaper editors, research scientists, policy makers, television writers and movie producers, university presidents, and Supreme Court justices." When such women opt out, they cheat themselves and deprive the future of their full worth. Hirshman is particularly scathing about a Harvard graduate who sketches her life as a stay-at-home mom as a merry-go-round of painting, biking, writing letters to editors and elected officials, playing tag and climbing trees with the kids. "My correspondent's life does have a certain Tom Sawyerish quality to it," Hirshman concedes, "but she has no power in the world. Why would the con-

## Jerusalem (II)

### Should the U.S. Embassy be moved to the capital of Israel?

In a previous clarifying message we showed that before the Six-Day War in 1967, the claim that Jerusalem was a Moslem/Arab city had seldom been asserted and that such claim had come about only in modern times. The status of Jerusalem continues to be of great importance. The Arabs demand that at least the eastern part of the city should be yielded to them. The Israelis insist that Jerusalem continue as the indivisible capital of their country.

#### What are the facts?

**Jerusalem – reunited and indivisible.** Ever since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, all American governments and Congress have confirmed their conviction that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and that, once reunited, it should remain indivisible.

Before the Six-Day War in 1967 the city was divided, the Jordanians having occupied the eastern part. During their 19-year reign, all Jewish residents were driven out and all Jewish places of worship closed or destroyed. The various Christian denominations operated under the strict control of Moslem authorities.

All this ended in 1967 with the liberation of all of Jerusalem by the Israel Defense Forces and with the reunification of the city. Access to all holy places became available to all. The many religious bodies in the holy city (and in all of Israel) are able to pursue their activities without any restrictions. Jerusalem is today truly a free and open city. Just as the whole world rejoiced when the ugly wall dividing Berlin was torn down, so do we rejoice that the wall, the barbed wire and the machine gun emplacements dividing the city were finally torn down.

**U.S. Embassy not in Israel's capital.** While the Palestinians lay claim to the eastern part of Jerusalem and wish it to become the capital of a hoped-for Palestinian state, nobody questions the western part of the city to be Israeli. It is remarkable therefore that, despite this universal recognition, the United States has steadfastly insisted on placing and keeping its embassy in Tel Aviv, the major commercial city, instead of in Jerusalem, Israel's capital and the seat of the Knesset (parliament), the Supreme Court, and

of all government offices. It is as if a government accredited to the United States were to insist on keeping its embassy in, say, New York, rather than in Washington D.C.

With the U.S. in the lead, all other countries, with the sole exceptions of Costa Rica and El Salvador, have also located

**“The status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state.”**

their embassies in Tel Aviv. It is a bizarre situation: All ambassadors and their staffs – including the U.S. ambassador and his staff – must make almost daily trips to Jerusalem, because no government business is conducted

in Tel Aviv. The United States maintains diplomatic relations with over 150 countries. In all of them, the U.S. Embassy is located in the nation's designated capital. The only exception is Israel where, so far, our government has insisted on locating its embassy in a city other than the capital.

#### Congress in favor of moving embassy to Jerusalem.

Despite the fact that, prior to their elections, both Presidents Bush and President Clinton assured the public that the U.S. Embassy would be moved to Israel's capital, the Administration has until now blocked all moves in that direction, declaring that it would jeopardize the so-called “final status” talks on Jerusalem.

Leaders of Congress – both Republican and Democratic – have introduced legislation by which the U.S. Embassy would have to be moved to Jerusalem within the next three or four years. And that was about ten years ago. That legislation has been endorsed by 93 senators. The U.S. has a lease on a 10-acre embassy lot in Talpiot, a totally Jewish neighborhood in West Jerusalem. It is to be hoped therefore, that, before too long, reality will prevail and that the U.S. Embassy in Israel will indeed be located in Jerusalem – the capital of one of its closest allies.

The reason given for not moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem is that it might violate “Arab sensitivities.” That might indeed be the case. But while there would be some posturing, none of the Arab states could afford to do much else. Egypt would certainly not refuse its yearly multi-billion dollar subsidy from Washington. King Abdullah of Jordan would not jeopardize the political and financial lifeline that the U.S. has extended to him. Saudi Arabia would make some perfunctory noises, but that would be just about all. The status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state. The move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem will signal once and for all that there will be no U.S. or world support for the division of Jerusalem and for the establishment – in any part of it – as the capital of a new Arab state.

This ad has been published and paid for by

# FLAME

Facts and Logic About the Middle East  
P.O. Box 590359 ■ San Francisco, CA 94159  
Gerardo Joffe, President

FLAME is a tax-exempt, non-profit educational 501 (c)(3) organization. Its purpose is the research and publication of the facts regarding developments in the Middle East and exposing false propaganda that might harm the interests of the United States and its allies in that area of the world. Your tax-deductible contributions are welcome. They enable us to pursue these goals and to publish these messages in national newspapers and magazines. We have virtually no overhead. Almost all of our revenue pays for our educational work, for these clarifying messages, and for related direct mail.

To receive free FLAME updates, visit our website: [www.factsandlogic.org](http://www.factsandlogic.org)

gressmen she writes to listen to someone whose life so resembles that of a toddler's, Harvard degree or no?"

Hirshman's remedies to attack and reverse this social, political, and intellectual retardation range from the eminently sensible (change the tax code to stop penalizing working women, since "joint marital filing hurts the lesser earner") to the mildly provocative (persuading college girls to stop "dabbling" in liberal arts and indulging their creative fancies—"if you're not Frida Kahlo and you major in art, you're going to wind up answering the phones at some gallery in Chelsea, hoping a rich male collector comes to rescue you") to the absurdly mundane ("Never know when you're out of milk"). But a bundle of remedies will not succeed if there is nothing to bind them together. "The problem is today's feminist agenda is just that—a bunch of programs unmoored from the values that started them in the first place." What Hirshman proposes is a "values feminism" that displaces the current fetishizing of "choice," which she considers a weasel word—a way for women to rationalize their deference to male authority. "The epitome of the choice strategy had to be when *Sex and the City*'s Charlotte tried to justify to her lawyer friend, Miranda, her decision to quit her job in part in response to pressure from her insufferable first husband. 'I choose my choice!' Charlotte intoned repeatedly. 'I choose my choice!'"

Choosing your choices, feeling your feelings, "it is what it is": with such tautologies women spin their own cocoons, and cut off their circulation. Feminism should stop coddling these wishy-washies. "If women who believe that you should give up everything but the food in your mouth to stay home are feminists, why is feminism bothering with the fact that women aren't paid fairly in the workplace? If feminism supports the decision to choose yourself into dependency, where is the muscle for women's mastery over their own reproductive fates? Only when feminism returns to its roots in the value of a flourishing life for women will it get the traction to make any difference."

It is possible that the words "feminism" and "feminist" themselves have become so barnacled with right-wing abuse and cheap pop sociology that they are a guaranteed put-off, no matter how infused with justice and equality they might be. Certainly Caitlin Flanagan regards them as discardable leftovers that a

modern gal can do without, now that the big wars have been won. She states in the preface to her book that "this is not a book about equal rights or equal opportunities. It is a book about what came after those things had been secured." Hirshman would counter that equal rights and equal opportunities cannot be taken for granted; they are under constant attrition and erosion—the hard-fought gains won by those grumpy feminists that Flanagan finds so ogreish could be lost in the courts, voting booths, and legislatures while the Mommy Wars kick up a lot of sideshow sawdust. Perhaps if Flanagan had daughters instead of sons, she would be less sanguine. Those boys and their activities take priority over nearly everything, even minor acts of charity. "I can remember my mother faithfully cutting the wrappers off cans of dog food," Flanagan writes,

because if she sent in enough of them, the manufacturer would make a contribution to Guide Dogs for the Blind. I myself have compassion fatigue and have limited my "charitable giving" to a few circumscribed causes. At the back of Erma Bombeck's last book, published after her death from complications following a kidney transplant, is an organ donor card that the reader can fill out, along with information on the Erma Bombeck Organ Donor Awareness Project. I keep meaning to fill that card out; my mother would have done it in an instant, without thinking twice about it. But I'm a busy woman—my children are two-sport athletes at age seven—and I haven't gotten around to it yet.

She probably never will. ■

## Ruth Franklin The Epilogue

FEAR: ANTI-SEMITISM IN POLAND  
AFTER AUSCHWITZ

By Jan T. Gross

(Random House, 303 pp., \$25.95)

I.

**I**N SPRING 1945, NOT LONG AFTER his liberation from Auschwitz, Primo Levi, traveling across southern Poland by train, got off in a small town to stretch his legs and immediately found himself at the center of a group of curious people, all speaking excitedly, and incomprehensibly, in Polish. "Perhaps I was among the first dressed in 'zebra' clothes to appear in that place," he surmised, referring to the striped uniform of the death camp, in *The Reawakening*, his memoir of the journey home through the wreckage of Europe. Fortunately for Levi, "in the middle of the group of workers and peasants a bourgeois appeared, with a felt hat, glasses and a leather briefcase in his hand—a lawyer. He was Polish, he spoke French and German well, he was an extremely courteous and benevolent person; in short, he possessed all the requisites enabling me finally, after the long year of slavery and silence, to recognize in him the messenger, the spokes-

man of the civilized world, the first that I had met." Levi spoke "at dizzy speed of those so recent experiences of mine, of Auschwitz nearby, yet, it seemed, unknown to all, of the hecatomb from which I alone had escaped, of everything," and the man translated.

But it did not take Levi long to figure out that something was amiss. "I do not know Polish, but I know how one says 'Jew' and how one says 'political'; and I soon realized that the translation of my account, although sympathetic, was not faithful to it. The lawyer described me to the public not as an Italian Jew, but as an Italian political prisoner. I asked him why, amazed and almost offended. He replied, embarrassed: '*C'est mieux pour vous. La guerre n'est pas finie.*'" It's better for you. The war isn't over.

This was literally true. Russian troops had liberated areas of eastern Poland as early as November 1944, but they did not reach Auschwitz until the end of January 1945, and other concentration camps remained operative as late as May. But it was in a larger sense that the war was not over for any Jew in Poland, and it would not be for some time. As Jan T. Gross recounts in his harrowing new book, Polish

Jews who had the amazing fortune to survive the camps were “unwelcomed” upon their return home with brutal violence. In June 1945, several Jews traveling by train in eastern Poland were murdered by their fellow passengers. In August, a mob attacked the synagogue in Kraków and then pursued Jews throughout the city, killing several and wounding dozens. The writer Zofia Nalkowska, visiting a Jewish orphanage that fall, noted that the children were unable to enroll in public school because of “beatings and persecution.” The following spring, the French Catholic intellectual Emmanuel Mounier reported that more than a thousand Jews had been killed in the Polish countryside over the past nine months. And on July 4, 1946, scores of Jews were killed and hundreds injured in a day-long city-wide bloodbath in Kielce that has become notorious as the deadliest peacetime pogrom in modern Europe.

It is the timing of these episodes, the dates—1945 and 1946!—that makes them so dumbfounding. We have all seen the pictures of the skeletons liberated from Buchenwald and Dachau: even in Poland, one of the most notoriously anti-Semitic nations in Europe, how could such figures elicit anything but sympathy? But as Gross has already shown, the Nazis’ persecution of the Jews was met with tacit—and sometimes open—acceptance in many parts of the country. With his last book, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*, Gross exposed the horrifying story of the massacre of more than a thousand Jewish residents of a small Polish town by their fellow citizens in July 1941. Though the incident was incited by the Germans, Gross established beyond a doubt that the mass murder was willingly carried out by Poles, who beat Jewish men, women, and children in the streets before rounding up nearly all who remained—half the town’s population—and burning them alive in a barn.

“We hypothesized that the frightening tragedy of the Polish Jews would cure the Poles of anti-Semitism,” wrote the journalist Wincenty Bednarczyk after Kielce. “It cannot be any other way, we thought, but that the sight of massacred children and old people must evoke a response of compassion and help.... But we didn’t know human nature.... It turned out that our notions about mankind were naïve. The country surprised us.” In fact, far from being wiped out, anti-Semitism continued to be so virulent after the war’s

end that Poles who had hidden Jews or otherwise helped them during the war guarded their good deeds with a secrecy normally reserved for the most heinous crimes—for fear of reprisals from their fellow citizens.

In *Fear*, Gross takes the argument of *Neighbors* a devastating step further. Jedwabne, he now concludes, may have been anomalous in its scale, but it was not an isolated incident. The ingrained anti-Semitism that made it possible for half the citizens of a town to rise up against the other half was a general feature of Polish society. Rather than magically disappearing after May 1945, it continued to manifest itself in violence against Jews until its climax in the murderous rampage in Kielce the following year—which, like the Jedwabne pogrom, was carried out in large part by ordinary Poles. “This could have happened anywhere in Poland, and at any time during this period,” Gross writes. “Evidently the moral economy of Polish society after the war allowed for the murdering of Jews.”

How did such a “moral economy” come to exist? Part of the blame, of course, rests with the Nazis, who formulated their policies and propaganda deliberately to dehumanize the Jews so as to make their genocide as self-evident, as uncontroversial, as the extermination of vermin. “The Germans accustomed our children and us grown-ups as well to concepts of differentiating between human beings and people who were less than human.... A well-known question asked by a small child was widely written about in the underground press: ‘Mommy, was it a human being that was killed or a Jew?’” wrote one Polish journalist in December 1945. “I cannot forecast the future moral development of children who during their formative years, when moral and ethical notions crystallize, were taught that it is all right to kill a few million people.” But Gross’s book documents, in disturbing and indisputable detail, that many Poles did not need the Germans to teach them this lesson. Auschwitz simply made it easier for them to act upon what they already believed.

## II.

ON JULY 1, 1946, HENRYK Blaszczyk, eight years old, hitched a ride from Kielce, an unremarkable mid-size city in south-central Poland, to visit friends in a village fifteen miles away. He returned

two days later, telling his parents that he had been kidnapped by Jews and hidden in the cellar of their Kielce headquarters on Planty Street, from which he had escaped. The following morning, July 4, the boy, his father, and a neighbor reported the crime to the police and then proceeded, accompanied by police officers, to the Jewish Committee building, spreading the word en route of Henryk’s kidnapping and their plan to arrest the Jews and liberate the other children held there. It was quickly discovered that Henryk had been lying: the building had no cellar. But a crowd of police and civilians had already gathered. A confrontation ensued between the police and the state Security Service, which had been called in on the suspicion that the incident was a “provocation” on the part of the Jews to stir up unrest. Soon about a hundred soldiers appeared and the crowd briefly settled down; the Jews in the building, according to one witness, “sighed with relief, convinced that this was our rescue. And shooting began. But directed at us, not at the assailants.”

The police and the military entered the building and forced its inhabitants outside for the crowd to attack with pipes, stones, and their bare hands. Once they saw the soldiers engaged in violence against the residents, the mob let loose. One policeman testified that “Jews were brought from the building into the square, where the population cruelly murdered them, and the armed soldiers ... went back into the building and kept bringing out other Jews.” A Jewish woman deposed two days later recalled that a policeman threw two girls off a third-floor balcony “and the crowd in the courtyard finished them off.” The head of the Jewish Committee was shot in the back while telephoning the Security Service for help. Despite efforts from individual army commanders to restore order, the violence went on all morning. A second surge began when workers from a nearby foundry showed up on their lunch break to join in. Injured Jews lucky enough to escape were assaulted in the hospitals by other patients and even the staff. A Polish nurse who came from a town more than seventy miles away to help—only she and a single Jewish doctor were willing to minister to the victims—testified that some of the patients had been treated so cruelly that when she first approached them, they tried to hide under their beds.

The violence spread throughout the city: according to one historian, up to

one-quarter of Kielce's adult population was actively involved. Anyone who appeared to be Jewish was in danger. There was no coordination; in many cases, people who banded together to carry out attacks did not even know each other. The incidents that Gross reports are unbearable to read. Regina Fisz, a mother with a newborn baby, was taken from her home, along with a male friend, by an impromptu gang of four men, among them a police corporal. The men had no plan for how to dispose of their victims, so they flagged down a truck driver to ask for a ride, telling him, in the corporal's words, "we had Jews whom we wanted to take out to kill. The driver agreed, he only asked for a thousand zloty, and I said, 'It's a deal.'" (It is worth remembering that the "Jews" in this case consisted of a man, a woman, and a baby.) The driver took them to a forest outside the city, where Fisz and her baby were shot, while the friend escaped. Afterward, the four men left the bodies for locals to bury and adjourned to a restaurant with the truck driver, where they enjoyed a meal together and split the proceeds from the sale of the two adults' valuables.

Such incidents were not limited to the city center. A student walking by a creek on the outskirts of Kielce that afternoon came upon a crowd stoning a young Jewish man. "I remember that he had a vest and a white shirt, and he wasn't screaming or moving anymore. With head hanging low he was just standing in the middle of that creek." The people "were throwing stones in a somehow detached, leisurely manner—a stone would fly, people saw whether the man fell, then somebody else would throw a stone." All the while they were talking among themselves in what the student described as a "picniclike atmosphere." "They shared their impressions, observations, how this one caught a Jew here, and that one somewhere else.... They were lifting stones and throwing them calmly, as if the death of a human being ... were not at stake here. This was the most incredible sight."

As the hysteria spread to the railway station, even Jews on trains passing through Kielce became potential targets. As Gross reports, Boy Scouts aboard the trains helped to finger Jewish passengers, who were either pulled out and murdered in the station or thrown off as the trains passed through. In at least one instance the dispatcher held a train at Kielce longer than the scheduled stop to allow more time for the "impromptu

pogrom" to proceed. One man waiting to meet a passenger at the station testified that when he tried to help the victims, he was threatened by a crowd yelling, "Jews have killed our children and you dare to defend them!"

A historian who passed through the station that day as a ten-year-old boy later recalled it as a defining moment of his life. He remembered an atmosphere of excitement after the train stopped; then a boy appeared at the door of his compartment and looked all the passengers over. Soon a group of armed railway guards came for one of the men: "Today I know that he was a Jew, a man with Semitic features." The man was shot on the spot. Years later, the historian was still "helpless" to explain what had happened:

On the one hand there was ... a sense that something bad, not good, was taking place, but that it could not be helped. It was happening because it had to be that way. And no attempt to respond, to defend, nothing of the sort. ... One can speak about long-embedded anti-Semitism but this is not enough. ... I know today that I was one of many people—my age is of no importance—who did not react at all to this. The remainder of the trip passed as if nothing had happened. ... The entire society behaved this way. For decades this matter was covered under a veil of silence.

### III.

THE HUMAN RESPONSE TO such reports is simply to howl, "Why?" It is to Gross's credit that he manages to turn his own howl—his meticulously researched book is not devoid of emotion—into a serious investigation of how these brutalities could have occurred. He quickly writes off the *Blaszczyk's* given explanation: the ancient canard of ritual murder—the use of the blood of Christian children to bake matzo—which took on a perverse new twist after the war, when emaciated and depleted concentration camp survivors were said to seek Polish children for "blood transfusions." Although, unbelievably, residents of Kielce interviewed as late as the mid-1980s were still not willing completely to disavow the blood libel, Gross finds compelling evidence that it could not have been the primary motivator for the pogrom—not the least of which is that,

after the Jewish Committee moved out of its building on Planty Street, locals were happy to help themselves to the provisions that were left behind, including matzo. "I liked it too, why not," said one Polish woman interviewed for a documentary about the pogrom.

Gross treats more seriously the claim that the violence was incited by Jewish collaboration with the communists, a belief that is held by many in Poland to this day. As a commission led by Kielce's bishop, Czesław Kaczmarek, to investigate the pogrom wrote in a report delivered to the American ambassador later that year, "Jews are disliked, even hated on the entire territory of Poland" because of their preferential treatment by the Soviets in exchange for collaboration. "The vast majority of the Jews in Poland eagerly proselytize Communism, work in the notorious Security Service, make arrests, torture prisoners and kill them," wrote Kaczmarek, "and for this they are disliked by society, which does not like Communism and has had enough of Gestapo-like methods." (Of course, everyone in postwar Europe had "had enough of Gestapo-like methods," but the Jews most of all.)

Gross acknowledges that some Jews did occupy positions of responsibility in the Security Service, though Poles of course held many more. But he rightly shows to be nonsense the idea that Jews systematically informed on their Polish neighbors—and that they benefited materially as a result. One Polish woman, believing the rumors that the Jews were "rich, powerful, and well-connected," had gone to the Jewish Committee building shortly before the pogrom to seek help for her mother in prison; the family had sheltered Jews during the war, and she presented a letter from the woman they had saved. She found that the rooms were barely furnished, and their occupants "seemed like they were shipwrecked.... [They looked] sad, subdued, crushed." Needless to say, no one there had any "connections," but they offered to start a collection to help her hire a lawyer. Gross notes the discrepancy between these two stereotypes: the images of rich and powerful Jews torturing Poles and emaciated Jews returning from concentration camps to prey on Polish children for their blood cannot be logically reconciled.

Gross concludes that the depth and the ferocity of postwar Polish anti-Semitism, which he describes as a "cultural phenomenon," must stem from psychological sources, arguing that it was

"widespread collusion in the Nazi-driven plunder, spoliation, and eventual murder of the Jews that generated Polish anti-Semitism after the war." Again, clearly anticipating the inevitable attacks, he has marshaled an array of shocking evidence, much of it from contemporaneous newspaper and magazine reports and testimonies of Jewish survivors returning to Poland. As he demonstrates, the mass murder of Polish Jews created a "social vacuum" that the Poles jockeyed to fill, foremost by taking over the possessions that their Jewish friends and neighbors had abandoned. What was robbed from the Jews ranged from the existential to the minuscule. Survivors who had left property with their neighbors often were unable to get it back: the legal department of the Central Committee for Polish Jews recorded a variety of complaints, including one from a woman trying to reclaim "two eiderdowns and four pillows." There were no societal or legal norms regulating the return of Jewish property, only the understanding that "those who were more intimately involved with dispossessing the Jews had a better claim on the goods than anyone else."

Locals, Gross writes, "came to perceive Jews as a resource that could be harvested," to the point of territorial behavior: opportunists who arrived from other villages after a pogrom were told to plunder their own Jews. When one Polish woman went to Radzilów, a village in northeastern Poland, to claim an apartment among the vacancies left after Jews were killed in a pogrom during the summer of 1941—since the publication of *Neighbors*, Gross has discovered that Jedwabne-like pogroms took place in many villages in the area—a man reproached her for "not having been there when people were needed to kill the Jews, and only showing up later. . . . 'You could have killed ten Jews and you would have gotten a house.'" The woman's mother-in-law spoke up in the family's defense, pointing out that on the day of the pogrom, her grandson had poured gasoline on the roof of the barn where the Jews were imprisoned. As with the Kielce truck driver who needed no convincing to join in the murder of a Jewish baby, the most chilling element of this story is the mother-in-law's unself-conscious assertion of the family's rights: the morality of killing Jews is not up for discussion, nor is there any evidence of coercion. As Gross wrote in *Neighbors*, "Local Polish people killed the Jews be-

cause they wanted to, not because they had to."

**H**OW DID RELATIONS BETWEEN Poles and Jews—who had lived together in the same cities and villages, for the most part peaceably, for hundreds of years—so thoroughly and violently unravel? Indeed, one of the most tragic features of the Jedwabne killings is the familiarity between the victims and their executioners, a closeness recalled fondly by both sides. "Everybody was on a first-name basis, Janek, Icek," said a Polish pharmacist interviewed for a documentary about Jedwabne. "Life here was . . . somehow idyllic." When discussing the Jedwabne pogrom with Gross, Rabbi Jacob Baker, who emigrated from the town before the war, used the diminutives "Franek" and "Staszek" to identify two of the most brutal murderers. Marta Kurkowska-Budzan, a social historian who grew up in Jedwabne and interviewed some of the residents before the news of the pogrom became public, found numerous stories of cooperation and friendship among Polish and Jewish residents. A man who served as a butcher's apprentice had assisted the local *shochet* in ritual slaughter and remembered some Yiddish; a woman who led the local Catholic girls' youth group became interested in Jewish dance and later taught it to Polish children.

Yet a chasm opens wide beneath these surface pleasantries. Consider the language used by even the most horrified observers of the Kielce pogrom: the victims are never simply identified as women or men, but always as "Jews." (It is worth noting that the Polish word for Jew, *Zyd*, has unavoidably negative overtones.) "Jews were brought from the building into the square, where the population cruelly murdered them, and the armed soldiers . . . went back into the building and kept bringing out other Jews," says the policeman. The student who witnessed the stoning in the creek speaks of "a Jew, a twenty-some-year-old man. . . ." At the same time, Poles speak of other Poles, even those who have committed murder, as "our people," *nasze ludzie*. "A [German] gendarme stood on the balcony and looked at the scene. But our people did it," testified an inhabitant of Radzilów about the pogrom there. When Kurkowska-Budzan asked her interviewees who killed Jedwabne's Jews, they answered, "Ours." As Joanna B. Michlic

demonstrates in her important new book, *Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present*, the distinction between "ourselves" and "the other" (foreigners, usually Jews) has long been a crux of Polish national identity.

Gross has confessed his inability to understand how "a wave of crimes against Polish citizens, committed over an extended period of time by numerous Polish citizens" —in Jedwabne as well as in some two dozen other villages in the region—had remained invisible to historians for so long. The answer is that the Jews were not really considered Polish citizens. The two populations had lived side by side and were often socially or economically interdependent, but that did not negate their essential separation, which Michlic attributes to the enduringly powerful tropes of anti-Semitism disseminated by the Catholic Church in Poland and by the press. Another important factor, particularly in eastern Poland during the interwar years, was the right-wing National Democratic Party, which argued that the Jews were the worst threat to Poland's independence and advocated their removal.

And after the war, the Polish population simply did not have room in its national narrative for the crimes it had perpetrated against another group in its midst. According to the mythology that arose, the Poles had heroically struggled against both the Nazis and the Soviets before finally, bitterly, succumbing. Like all national mythologies, it is founded on truth: the Poles did struggle heroically, and they were indeed victimized terribly by their occupiers and oppressors. The history of Poland in the twentieth century inspires both compassion and awe. But victimization does not erase historical agency. Not only are victims still capable of criminal acts, but their victimization can sometimes function as the psychological foundation for their criminal acts. No matter what depredations have been perpetrated against a group, that group must still be responsible for its own actions. (Can the country that created Solidarity really be considered a pathetic pawn of history?)

"If the Nazis had eradicated Jewish life in view of stunned and traumatized (rather than mostly indifferent and partly complicitous) Polish neighbors, postwar anti-Semitic violence would have been a practical and a psychological impossibility," Gross concludes. He has support from a contemporaneous authority, the

sociologist Stanislaw Ossowski, who wrote an article about Polish attitudes toward Jews that appeared shortly after the Kielce pogrom:

Let one imagine that in 1939 someone predicted the inconceivable destruction of the Jewish population in Poland. . . . Let us imagine that . . . we were asked to deduce what the attitudes of the Polish population would be toward the remnants of the Jews in 1945 and 1946.

Simple human compassion, in view of the terrible sufferings of the murdered masses and the horror of the extermination camps; hatred of a common enemy; blood jointly shed . . . these would be arguments sufficing, probably, to lead one to conclude that in postwar Poland anti-Semitism as a social phenomenon would be an impossibility.

But someone more insightful, or more cynical, or more disputatious, or better informed about historical precedents could have reminded us even then that compassion is not the only imaginable response to misfortune suffered by other people. That those whom fate has destined for annihilation easily can appear disgusting to others, and be removed beyond the pale of human relations. . . . We could be reminded that if one person's disaster benefits somebody else, an urge appears to persuade oneself and others that that disaster was morally justified.

#### IV.

**S**O LET US IMAGINE, NOW, THAT in 1999 someone had predicted the revelation that the inconceivable destruction of the Jewish population in Poland had been carried out in part by Polish hands—by the Jews' Polish neighbors. Let us imagine that we were asked to deduce what the attitudes of the Polish population would be toward the historians and the journalists who unearthed these stories and toward the survivors and their descendants who asked for some kind of recognition on the part of the public. Simple human compassion in view of the terrible sufferings that had taken place; sorrow and shame that ordi-

### Policing the Yard

Picking up what they'd dropped not long before,  
They gain a new acquaintance with the ground  
That will return to haunt them all the more.

Lost words and deeds, quickly become a bore,  
Make for how tedious they will have found  
Picking up what they'd dropped so long before.

The more lost buried memories they store  
Up in a subsubsubterranean mound  
(Those will return to haunt them all), the more

They find themselves returning to the lore  
Of returning, sadly trying to expound  
—Picking up what they'd dropped so long before—

The meaning of their task, as they explore  
The lowly territory all around.  
This will return to haunt them—all the more

For its low hopelessness as well as for  
All their conclusions being quite unsound.  
Picking up what they'd dropped too long before:  
That will return to haunt them all the more.

JOHN HOLLANDER

nary Poles could have committed such heinous crimes against unarmed victims; a desire to apologize, to bring all the facts to light and to rewrite the falsified pages of history—these would be arguments sufficing, probably, to lead one to conclude that in twenty-first-century Poland anti-Semitism as a social phenomenon would be an impossibility.

But, as Stanislaw Ossowski discovered, "compassion is not the only imaginable response to misfortune suffered by other people." *Neighbors* garnered accolades in the United States and abroad, but it was the subject of a passionate and often appalling debate in Poland. While some journalists and academics supported Gross's conclusions, others—including revisionist historians, members of the clergy, and much of Jedwabne's current population and leadership—savagely attacked both the book and its author, arguing that the murderers represented only a handful of thugs rather than the general public, quibbling over the precise number of Jews killed at Jedwabne, and claiming, again, that the attack was revenge for the Jews' collaboration with the Soviets (a myth that persists to this day).

*Fear* has not yet appeared in Poland, but preliminary mentions in the press leave no reason to doubt that it will meet with a similar reception.

One is shocked to read of the brutalities in Jedwabne and Kielce, but the shock is mitigated somewhat by the knowledge that sixty years have passed since these crimes. There can be no such consolation reading about the responses to Jedwabne. Far from regarding *Neighbors* as an opportunity to come clean about the past and to ask for forgiveness, many in Poland treated Gross's book as a personal affront, with reactions ranging from defensively churlish to openly anti-Semitic. At a ceremony held in Jedwabne on July 10, 2001, marking the sixtieth anniversary of the pogrom, President Aleksander Kwasniewski issued a formal apology "in my own name and in the name of those Poles whose consciences are shattered by this crime." Sadly, he did not speak for the majority of his constituents: in a poll conducted around the same time, 60 percent of the respondents opposed

offering any apology for the pogrom.

An insulting debate was conducted over the semantics of a new monument to replace the old one that held the Nazis responsible for the crime; the inscription that was finally decided upon honors the dead but does not name their murderers, despite complaints from Jewish groups and the Israeli ambassador. The commemoration ceremony was boycotted by almost all of Jedwabne's residents, who posted signs reading "We Do Not Apologize" and "Let the Slanderers Apologize to the Polish Nation." Also not in attendance were any representatives of the Polish church: not the local priest, Edward Orlowski, who had claimed that "what happened in Jedwabne also happened all over Europe," or Cardinal Józef Glemp, who said in a statement that the Jews should apologize for collaborating with the Soviets. (Just a few months earlier, a priest in Gdansk had constructed an Easter display featuring a replica of the charred barn from Jedwabne with the words "Jews killed Jesus, the prophets, and also persecuted us"; thankfully, he was ordered to remove it.)

It should be said that many Poles did

confront the news from Jedwabne with sadness and horror, and did try to use the occasion to pay their respects to the memory of the murdered Jews and to their descendants. The town's mayor attempted to rename a local school in honor of Antonina Wyrzykowska, a local woman who saved seven Jedwabne Jews by hiding them in her home and as a result has been ostracized by the community. (Not only was the mayor's proposal rejected, but he had to resign after participating in the commemoration ceremony.) One resident told a journalist that she lights a candle at the memorial every year on the anniversary of the murders, "without letting anyone see me." And liberal commentators raged against the ignorance and viciousness of their compatriots. "The tragedy of Jedwabne, which sixty years after the fact could have become a national catharsis and an occasion for correcting Poland's record in the international marketplace of the conscience, has become merely the latest display of Polish failure," wrote Jerzy Slawomir Mac in a leading opinion magazine. But such voices sound sadly thin against the torrent of unreconstructed anti-Semitism unleashed by this episode.

Not unjustified, those who have been honest enough to recognize the beastly tenor of the debate tend to carefully separate themselves culturally from the elements of society that they are criticizing. There is a sense among Polish intellectuals that anti-Semitism is something of a class issue: a problem among the masses, certainly, but not for the elite. But this can be true only up to a point. Consider one particularly bizarre contemporary manifestation of anti-Semitism: the trend, in certain cities, for rival soccer teams to label their opponents "Jews." Visiting Lodz several years ago, I was bewildered to find Jewish stars and swastikas spray-painted all over town, together with the tags of the soccer teams. "These are young boys, students, hooligans, just making trouble," said one person I asked about the graffiti, a cultured woman in her sixties. I later learned that it is a common anti-Semitic trope for the word "Jew" to be used as a generic slur, regardless of whether the person being insulted is actually Jewish—in Poland it has been applied not only to soccer players, but also to members of parliament and even to priests.

To write off such uglinesses, even relatively insignificant ones, as the problem of a different sector of society is a

dangerous evasion. The issue of class is visible in the background of the various accounts examined here, from the lawyer whom Primo Levi welcomed as a "spokesman of the civilized world" to the student who observed the stoning in the creek to the future historian in the railway carriage. These were all members of the intelligentsia who chose, at least in the reports here, not to confront the anti-Semitism they witnessed even as they privately condemned it. And there is every sign that the Polish elite still do not recognize how serious a problem Polish anti-Semitism continues to be.

This summer, after Elie Wiesel wrote that he had been the subject of anti-Semitic attacks after giving a speech in Kielce ten years ago, Adam Michnik, a former dissident who is the editor-in-chief of Poland's leading liberal newspaper, responded angrily that Wiesel had conveyed "the image of a country unable to confront the plague of anti-Semitism." Citing the debate over *Neighbors*, Michnik wrote that "there is probably no other country in East Central Europe that would be accounting for the dark chapters of its own history with such seriousness and honesty." To write about anti-Semitism in Poland without acknowledging this, he said, "falsifies—even if unintentionally—the truth about Poland." Who does not have the deepest respect for Adam Michnik, one of the founders of the Solidarity movement? Not surprisingly, his newspaper published many of the most responsible and thoughtful articles about Jedwabne. But to say that the debate over *Neighbors* as a whole represented a serious and honest intellectual accounting is itself a falsification.

**E**LEVEN YEARS AGO, WHEN I WAS a student in Kraków, Poland's Jewish past was still something of a dark secret. It was not always easy to find sites of Jewish interest in Poland, or people willing to talk about them. Synagogues lay unrestored, their distinguishing details obscured by piles of rubble. Memorials to the victims of the Holocaust were in out-of-the-way spots, often unmarked on maps. Even the Jewish cemetery in Lodz, the largest in all of Europe, was entered from a back street, its gate unmarked. Kraków's old Jewish quarter, Kazimierz, was largely deserted, with only the glimmerings of the once-rich Jewish community evident: one synagogue held services, and the bookstore

across the street had just hung out a shingle advertising "Schindler's List" tours. The only Jewish issue that received prominent press coverage that summer was a minor scandal involving a flea market vendor who had been selling what he claimed was "Jewish soap" from the Stutthof concentration camp.

Now anyone who reads the travel pages has heard about the much-ballyhooed renaissance of Jewish culture in Poland, complete with sold-out klezmer festivals and a popular brand of spirits called "Kosher Vodka." Half a dozen Jewish-themed hotels welcome visitors to Kazimierz, with names like "Alef" and "Ester" and "Klezmer Hois"; the "Eden" sports mezuzahs on every door and advertises "the only mikveh bath in Poland," as if it were a jacuzzi. Kazimierz also boasts a number of Jewish restaurants, which interpret the cuisine creatively but can turn out a decent matzo-ball soup. On sale everywhere are sepia-toned postcards depicting the neighborhood a century ago, with "Kazimierz" spelled in Yiddish across the bottom, as well as wooden figurines of Jews with painted-on black coats and beards and prayerbooks.

This grim carnival of Holocaust tourism and Western capital is neither a sign nor a symptom of a greater change in Polish society. It is evidence only of the Polish national schizophrenia on the subject of Jews. It is lovely to restore old buildings and to cherish a culture that has perished. But the celebration of the Jews of Poland cannot substitute for a genuine confrontation with the manner of their disappearance: when, where, and by whom. There is no indication that the consumers of "Kosher Vodka" are interested in engaging in such a reckoning any time soon. As recently as January 2004, 40 percent of the respondents to a nationwide survey believed that Poland was "still being governed by Jews." ■

#### RESEARCH ASSOCIATE/PERSONAL ASSISTANT

*New York City*—Highly intelligent, resourceful individuals with exceptional communication skills sought to undertake research projects and administrative tasks for one of Wall Street's most successful entrepreneurs. We welcome applications from writers, musicians, artists, or others who may be pursuing other professional goals in the balance of their time. \$90-110k/yr to start (depending on qualifications). Resume to: gen8R@spsfind.com

## LA GUAIRA DIARIST

# Bananas

**I**T ISN'T A SECRET AS TO WHO might come. Venezuela is oil-rich, and the imperialist countries have kept an eye on our natural resources for some time now," explained Captain Jose Nuñez of the Bolivarian Naval Police. It was eight o'clock on a Wednesday morning in June, and I was seated, sweaty and barely awake, along with a group of 20 other journalists at a naval base in La Guaira, Venezuela. Packed into a sparsely furnished conference room, we listened to the captain explain why the government of President Hugo Chávez had decided to invite the press to a week's worth of war games. The military wanted the world to know that Venezuela was ready to greet the "imperialists" should they decide to stop by for a visit. This day's demonstration had been billed as the largest and most action-packed of those scheduled. A mock invasion was set to take place on the beach, with the government using tanks and companies of "elite amphibious fighters." "Seven hundred and twenty-five professional naval combatants and approximately 2,200 civilians will be involved in the day's activities, and we will show how we have integrated the people with the military," the captain stated.

WE WERE TAKEN TO THE DOCKS, where the captain announced that he would first demonstrate how the Venezuelan populace might smuggle arms past an occupying force. Three statues of the Virgin Mary lay on the ground, each nailed to the top of a long, slim, rectangular box. A pair of machine guns and a spare clip of ammunition were hidden inside each box. Sets of sanded wooden poles sprang from the sides of the boxes, so that the civilian participants could hoist the statues over their heads as though they were carrying Cleopatra, not chipped plaster. The civilians who had gathered for this exercise were an unexceptional bunch. Most wore fresh jeans, clean white t-shirts, and red hats embroidered with the acronym for Chávez's

political party, the Fifth Republic Movement. At the captain's signal, they picked up their assigned Virgin Marys and marched forward, slowly but surely, covering the 50 paces down the docks toward the waiting motor boats. At the head of the procession marched a woman chanting Hail Marys and crossing herself while cheap fireworks were shot into the air, exploding 30 feet above our heads in a simulation of cannon fire.

WE LEFT THE DOCKS AND PILED INTO boats: a guerrilla armada of gringo journalists, Venezuelan naval reservists, and chipped plaster statues. It was a short boat ride to the next beach. The Marys would be unloaded during the mock invasion; the procession would continue into the poor neighborhoods of the city, where the boxes would be dismantled and the weapons handed out to the eager populace. Or so we had been promised. In fact, we were out to sea for just under 90 minutes. Our small motor boat had no potable water, no shade, and stalled out twice. When we finally arrived at our destination, there were no tanks and no military personnel. Instead, the beach was packed with sunbathers who marveled at the spectacle as the boats circled and the captains argued among themselves. No one, it seemed, had bothered to notify the pilots that the beach was both rocky and lacked a dock. "Man, if you guys do decide to come," said my Venezuelan photographer, "it's going to take ten minutes to kick our asses."

FINALLY, ONE OF THE SKIPPERS EXERCISED some initiative, shouting at the sunbathers to jump into the water and help. A group of well-tanned teenagers waded up to the boats, lifted the statues over their heads, and carried them to dry land. As each one was set down, the onlookers applauded and crossed themselves. "And what about us?" asked my photographer, nervously fingering his camera. Our captain nodded to the side of the boat. "Jump," he said.

IT WOULD BE EASY TO WRITE OFF A day like this as yet one more example of the absurdity of Chávez's anti-imperialist rhetoric. To do so, however, would be to miss the point. Like Fidel Castro before him, Chávez's support is largely dependent on whichever enemy he presents as an imminent threat. When he assumed power in 1999, that threat was the Venezuelan political establishment. In the last seven years, however, Venezuela's opposition has crumbled. Enter George W. Bush and the specter of a U.S. invasion, a subject Chávez spends far more time discussing these days than the possibility of an opposition candidate running against him in this December's elections. The American president's preemptive, unilateral invasion of another oil-rich country is all the evidence Chávez needs to convince his most ardent supporters that U.S. intervention in Venezuela is a real possibility.

AND THE UNITED STATES HAS COMPLETELY underestimated Chávez, playing into the Venezuelan president's hands time and again. When Donald Rumsfeld compares Chávez to Adolf Hitler—or Condoleezza Rice calls for the creation of a regional "united front" to contain his influence—they are merely adding fuel to the fire. In the last few weeks, Chávez has simply taken to saying that the only person running against him is Bush.

THERE WAS NO OTHER CHOICE THAN to follow the lead of the teenagers and wade for shore. Barefoot and soaked to my thighs, I marched up the beach in an angry, thirsty, and sunburnt huff. Nuñez was there, his expression grim as he watched the whole affair unfold. I asked him what had happened to the elite amphibious fighters, the tanks, the 2,200 civilians. He seemed tired; his arms were folded across his chest and his hat was pulled low over his eyes. Without looking at me, he answered as if by rote. "The tanks came by when you were out to sea, and the civilians, they are hidden all around you, watching, learning, taking notes," he said. "This is guerrilla warfare, after all."

**SACHA FEINMAN**

*Sacha Feinman is a Venezuela-based freelance journalist.*

FROM THE NEW HOOVER STUDIES IN POLITICS, ECONOMICS, AND SOCIETY SERIES

# Critical Reading from Hoover

*Preserving Independent Courts in Angry Times*

## Confirmation Wars

*Preserving Independent Courts in Angry Times*

BENJAMIN WITTES

"This is the most interesting and fair-minded book ever written about the politics of judicial confirmation. The partisan participants in the judicial confirmation process should take Wittes's proposals for fixing the system very seriously, but for reasons he discouragingly explains, they probably won't."

—Jack Goldsmith, Harvard University

In *Confirmation Wars*, *Washington Post* editorial writer Benjamin Wittes examines the degradation of the judicial nominations process over the past fifty years—including the recent confirmations of Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito.

Drawing on years of experience reporting on judicial nominations, including numerous interviews with nominees and sitting judges, Wittes explains how the process has changed and how these changes threaten the independence of the courts. Getting beyond the partisan blame game that dominates most discussion of nominations, he argues that these changes represent an institutional response by Congress to modern judicial power and urges basic reforms to better insulate the judiciary system from the nastiness of contemporary politics.

*Confirmation Wars* is published in cooperation with the Hoover Institution.

**Benjamin Wittes** is an editorial writer for the *Washington Post* and a columnist for *Atlantic Monthly*. He is the author of *Starr: A Reassessment* (2002).

Rowman & Littlefield Publishers  
Distributed by National Book Network  
September 2006, 168 pages  
ISBN: 0-7425-5144-X  
\$22.95, Cloth

To order, call 800.462.6420 or visit [rowmanlittlefield.com](http://rowmanlittlefield.com).

## HOOVER INSTITUTION

*... ideas defining a free society*

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, Stanford California 94305-6010 Toll-free: 877.466.8374 Fax: 650.723.1687 [info@hoover.stanford.edu](mailto:info@hoover.stanford.edu) [www.hoover.org](http://www.hoover.org)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Americans spend over one million dollars on energy every minute.

So who has the power to change that?

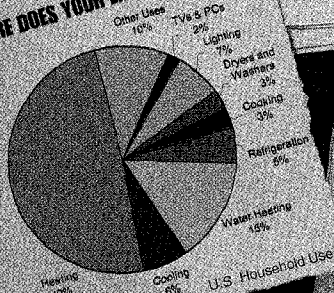
Because of surging economies in the developing world and continued growth among the industrialized nations, global energy use is climbing. As a result, supplies are tight. Prices are rising. And energy users are calling for viable alternatives.

The good news is we've got a huge source of alternative energy all around us. It's called conservation, and it's the lowest cost new source of energy we have at hand. A reduction of just 5% of global energy use would save us the equivalent of over 10 million barrels of oil a day. Clearly, saving energy is like finding it. So how do we do it?

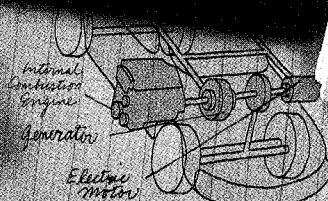
Incorporating energy efficient technology into new construction could reduce consumption by 40%. Governments and businesses must reduce their own energy use and promote conservation to their citizens and employees. Further improvements in fuel efficiency will play a crucial role, too. And the average person wields incredible power when it comes to conserving energy, from driving slower to switching to more efficient home appliances.

Of course, not only does using less energy mean there's more fuel to go around, it also means fewer greenhouse gas emissions. The fact is, if everyone began conserving today, we'd see results immediately. We've taken some of the steps needed to get started but we need your help to get the rest of the way.

## WHERE DOES YOUR ENERGY GO?



will you join us.com



## Conservation Facts:

If everyone reduced their driving speed from 65 to 55 mph, we'd save three million gallons of gas a day.

Replacing one incandescent lightbulb with a compact fluorescent lamp would save 500 pounds of coal and over a 1/2 ton of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

If just one in 10 homes used ENERGY STAR®-qualified appliances, the environmental benefit would be like planting 1.7 million new acres of trees.



## Chevron Steps Taken:

### Saving our own energy:

- Since 1992, Chevron has improved energy efficiency by 24%
- We use cogeneration technology at our refineries to produce additional electricity from otherwise wasted energy

### Saving other people's energy:

- Chevron Energy Solutions is a separate, proven business dedicated to energy efficiency.
- Success stories include:
  - Improvements that will lower the Northern CA postal service's electricity spending by 46%
  - Helping the U.S. government save taxpayers \$151 million while reducing greenhouse gas emissions by an expected 1.5 million tons



Human energy